

P A P E R S

ON

LITERATURE AND ART.

BY

S. MARGARET FULLER,

AUTHOR OF "A SUMMER ON THE LAKES;" "WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY," ETC. ETC.

PART II.

LONDON:

WILEY & PUTNAM, 6, WATERLOO PLACE.

1846.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]



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XXXIV.L8

PAPERS ON LITERATURE AND ART.

POETS OF THE PEOPLE.

RHYMES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF A HAND-LOOM WEAVER.

BY WILLIAM THOM, OF IVERURY.

"An' syne whan nichts grew cauld an' lang,
Ae while he sicht—ae while he sang."

Second Edition, with Additions. London, 1845.

WE cannot give a notion of the plan and contents of this little volume better than by copying some passages from the Preface :

"The narrative portion of these pages," says Thom, "is a record of scenes and circumstances interwoven with my experience—with my destiny. * * The feelings and fancies, the pleasure and the pain that hovered about my aimless existence were all my own—my property. These aerial investments I held and fashioned into measured verse. * * The self-portraiture herein attempted is not altogether Egotism neither, inasmuch as the main lineaments of the sketch are to be found in the separate histories of a thousand families in Scotland within these last ten years. That fact, however, being contemplated in mass, and in reference to its bulk only, acts more on the *wonder* than on the *pity* of mankind, as if human sympathies, like the human eye, could not compass an object exceedingly large, and, at the same time, exceedingly near. It is no small share in the end and aim of the present little work, to impart to one portion of the community a glimpse of what is sometimes going on in another; and even if only *that* is accomplished, some good service will be done. I have long had a notion that many of the heart-burnings that run through the SOCIAL WHOLE spring not so much from the distinctiveness of classes as their mutual ignorance of each other. The miserably rich look upon the miserably poor with distrust and dread, scarcely giving them credit for sensibility sufficient to feel their own sorrows. That is ignorance with its gilded side. The poor, in

turn foster a hatred of the wealthy as a sole inheritance—look on grandeur as their natural enemy, and bend to the rich man's rule in gall and bleeding scorn. Shallows on the one side and Demagogues on the other, are the portions that come oftenest into contact. These are the luckless things that skirt the great divisions, exchanging all that is offensive therein. 'MAN KNOW THYSELF,' should be written on the right hand; on the left, '*Men, know EACH OTHER.*'"

In this book, the recollections are introduced for the sake of the "Rhymes," and in the same relationship as parent and child, one the offspring of the other; and in that association alone can they be interesting. "I write no more in either than what I knew—and not all of that—so Feeling has left Fancy little to do in the matter."

There are two ways of considering Poems, or the products of literature in general. We may tolerate only what is excellent, and demand that whatever is consigned to print for the benefit of the human race should exhibit fruits perfect in shape, colour, and flavour, enclosing kernels of permanent value.

Those who demand this will be content only with the Iliads and Odysseys of the mind's endeavour.—They can feed nowhere but at rich men's tables; in the wildest recess of nature roots and berries will not content them. They say, "If you can thus satiate your appetite it is degrading; we, the highly refined in taste and the tissue of the mind, can nowhere be appeased, unless by golden apples, served up on silver dishes."

But, on the other hand, literature may be regarded as the great mutual system of interpretation between all kinds and classes of men. It is an epistolary correspondence between brethren of one family, subject to many and wide separations, and anxious to remain in spiritual presence one of another. These letters may be written by the prisoner in soot and water, illustrated by rude sketches in charcoal;—by nature's nobleman, free to use his inheritance, in letters of gold, with the fair margin filled with exquisite miniatures;—to the true man each will have value, *first,*

in proportion to the degree of its revelation as to the life of the human soul, *second*, in proportion to the perfection of form in which that revelation is expressed.

In like manner are there two modes of criticism. One which tries, by the highest standard of literary perfection the critic is capable of conceiving, each work which comes in his way ; rejecting all that it is possible to reject, and reserving for toleration only what is capable of standing the severest test. It crushes to earth without mercy all the humble buds of Phantasy, all the plants that, though green and fruitful, are also a prey to insects, or have suffered by drouth. It weeds well the garden, and cannot believe, that the weed in its native soil, may be a pretty, graceful plant.

There is another mode which enters into the natural history of every thing that breathes and lives, which believes no impulse to be entirely in vain, which scrutinizes circumstances, motive and object before it condemns, and believes there is a beauty in each natural form, if its law and purpose be understood. It does not consider a literature merely as the garden of the nation, but as the growth of the entire region, with all its variety of mountain, forest, pasture, and tillage lands. Those who observe in this spirit will often experience, from some humble offering to the Muses, the delight felt by the naturalist in the grasses and lichens of some otherwise barren spot. These are the earliest and humblest efforts of nature, but to a discerning eye they indicate the entire range of her energies.

These two schools have each their dangers. The first tends to hypercriticism and pedantry, to a cold restriction on the unstudied action of a large and flowing life. In demanding that the stream should always flow transparent over golden sands, it tends to repress its careless majesty, its vigour, and its fertilizing power.

The other shares the usual perils of the genial and affectionate ;

it tends to indiscriminate indulgence and a leveling of the beautiful with what is merely tolerable. For indeed the vines need judicious pruning if they are to bring us the ruby wine.

In the golden age to which we are ever looking forward, these two tendencies will be harmonized. The highest sense of fulfilled excellence will be found to consist with the largest appreciation of every sign of life. The eye of man is fitted to range all around no less than to be lifted on high.

Meanwhile the spirit of the time, which is certainly seeking, though by many and strange ways, the greatest happiness for the greatest number, by discoveries which facilitate mental no less than bodily communication, till soon it will be almost as easy to get your thought printed or engraved on a thousand leaves as to drop it from the pen on one, and by the simultaneous bubbling up of rills of thought in a thousand hitherto obscure and silent places, declares that the genial and generous tendency shall have the lead, at least for the present.

We are not ourselves at all concerned, lest excellent expression should cease because the power of speech to some extent becomes more general. The larger the wave and the more fish it sweeps along, the likelier that some fine ones should enrich the net. It has always been so. The great efforts of art belong to artistic regions, where the boys in the street draw sketches on the wall and torment melodies on rude flutes; shoals of sonneteers follow in the wake of the great poet. The electricity which flashes with the thunderbolts of Jove must first pervade the whole atmosphere.

How glad then are we to see that such men as Prince and Thom, if they are forced by 'poortith cauld' to sigh much in the long winter night, which brings them neither work nor pleasure, can also sing between.

Thom passed his boyhood in a factory, where, beside the disadvantage of ceaseless toil and din, he describes himself as being

under the worst moral influences. These, however, had no power to corrupt his native goodness and sweetness. One of the most remarkable things about him is his disposition to look on the bright side, and the light and gentle playfulness with which he enlivened, when possible, the darkest pages of his life.

The only teachers that found access to the Factory were some works of contemporary poets. These were great contemporaries for him. Scott, Byron, Moore, breathed full enough to fan a good blaze.—But still more important to the Scotsman and the craftsman were the teachings of those commemorated in the following passage which describes the first introduction of them to the literary world, and gives no unfair specimen both of his prose and his poetry.:

“Nearer and dearer to hearts like ours was the Ettrick Shepherd, then in his full tide of song and story; but nearer and dearer still than he, or any living songster—to us dearer—was our ill-fated fellow-craftsman, Tannahill, who had just then taken himself from a neglecting world, while yet that world waxed mellow in his lay. Poor weaver chiel! What we owe to thee! Your “Braes o’ Balquidder,” and “Yon Burnside,” and “Gloomy Winter,” and the “Minstrel’s” wailing ditty, and the noble “Gleneifer.” Oh! how they did ring above the rattling of a hundred shuttles! Let me again proclaim the debt we owe those Song Spirits, as they walked in melody from loom to loom, ministering to the low-hearted; and when the breast was filled with everything but hope and happiness, and all but seared, let only break forth the healthy and vigorous chorus “A man’s a man for a’ that,” the fagged weaver brightens up: His very shuttle skytes boldly along, and clatters through in faithful time to the tune of his merrier shopmates!

“Who dare measure in doubt the restraining influences of these very Songs? To us they were all instead of sermons. Had one of us been bold enough to enter a church he must have been ejected for the sake of decency. His forlorn and curiously patched habiliments would have contested the point of attraction with the ordinary eloquence of that period. So for all parties it was better that he kept to his garret, or wandered far “in the deep green wood.” Church bells rang not for us. Poets were indeed our Priests. But for those, the last relic of our moral existence would have surely passed away!

“Song was the dew-drops that gathered during the long dark night of despon-

dency, and were sure to glitter in the very first blink of the sun. * * * *
 To us Virtue, in whatever shape, came only in shadow, but even by that we saw her sweet proportions, and sometimes fain would have sought a kind acquaintance with her.—Thinking that the better features of humanity could not be utterly defaced where song and melody were permitted to exist, and that where they were not all crushed, Hope and Mercy might yet bless the spot, some waxed bold, and for a time took leave of those who were called to “sing ayont the moon,” groping amidst the material around and stringing it up, ventured on a home-made lilt.—Short was the search to find a newly kindled love, or some old heart abreaking. Such was aye amongst us and not always unnoticed, nor as ye shall see, unsung.

“It was not enough that we merely chaunted, and listened; but some more ambitious, or idle if ye will, they in time would try a self-conceived song. Just as if some funny little boy, bolder than the rest, would creep into the room where laid Neil Gow’s fiddle, and touch a note or two he could not name. How proud he is! how blest! for he had made a sound, and more, his playmates heard it, faith! Here I will introduce one of these early touches, not for any merit of its own, but it will show that we could sometimes bear and even seek for our minds a short residence, though not elegant at least sinless,—a fleeting visit of healthy things, though small they were in size and few in number. Spray from a gushing “linn,” if it slackened not the thirst, it cooled the brow.

“The following ditty had its foundation in one of those luckless doings which ever and aye follow misguided attachments; and in our abode of freedom these were almost the only kind of attachments known; so they were all on the wrong side of durability or happiness.

AIR—“*Lass, gin you lo’e me, tell me noo.*”

We’ll meet in yon wood, ’neath a starless sky,
 When wrestling leaves forsake ilk tree;
 We mauna speak mair o’ the days gane by,
 Nor o’ friends that again we *never* maun see:
 Nae weak word o’ mine shall remembrance gie
 O’ vows that were made and were broken to me:
 I’ll seem in my silence to reckon them dead,
 A’ wither’d and lost as the leaves that we tread.

Alane ye maun meet me, when midnight is near,
 By yon blighted auld bush that we fatally ken;
 The voice that allured me, O! let me nae hear,
 For my heart mauna beat to its music again.

In darkness we'll meet, and in silence remain,
Ilk word now and look now, were mockful or vain;
Ae mute moment morne the dream that misled,
Syne sinder as cauld as the leaves that we tread.

"This ditty was sung in the weaving shops, and when in the warbling of one who could lend a good voice to the occasion, and could coax the words and air into a sort of social understanding, then was it a song."

Thom had no furtherance for many years after this first appearance. It was hard work at all times to win bread; when work failed he was obliged to wander on foot elsewhere to procure it, losing his youngest child in a barn from the hardships endured one cold night of this untimely "flitting;" his admirable wife too died prematurely from the same cause. At one time he was obliged to go with his little daughter and his flute, (on which he is an excellent performer,) into the streets as a mendicant, to procure bread for his family. This last seems to have been far more cruel than any hardship to the honest pride native to the Scotchman. But there is another side. Like Prince, he was happy, as men in a rank more favoured by fortune seldom are, in his choice of a wife. He had an equal friend, a refined love, a brave, gentle, and uncomplaining companion in every sorrow, and wrote from his own experience the following lines:

THEY SPEAK O' WYLES.

AIR—" *Gin a bodie meet a bodie.*"

They speak o' wyles in woman's smiles,
An' ruin in her e'e—
I ken they bring a pang at whiles
That's unco sair to dree;
But mind ye this, the half-ta'en kiss,
The first fond fa'in' tear,
Is, Heaven kens, fu' sweet amends
An' tints o' heaven here.

When twa leal hearts in fondness meet,
 Life's tempests howl in vain—
 The very tears o' love are sweet
 When paid with tears again.
 Shall sapless prudence shake its pow,
 Shall cauldrie caution fear?
 Oh, dinna, dinna droun the lowe
 That lights a heaven here!

He was equally happy in his children, though the motherless bairns had to be sent, the little girl to tend cows, the darling boy to a hospital (where his being subjected, when alone, to a surgical operation, is the occasion of one of the poor Poet's most touching strains.) They were indeed his children in love and sympathy, the source of thought and joy, such as is never known to the rich man who gives up for banks and ships all the immortal riches domestic joys might bring him, leaving his children first to the nursery-maid, then to hired masters, and last to the embrace of a corrupt world. He was also most happy in his "aërial investments," and like Prince, so fortunate, midway in life before his power of resistance was exhausted, and those bitterest of all bitter words *TOO LATE*, stamped upon his brow, as to secure the enlightened assistance of one generous journal, the timely assistance of one generous friend, which, though little in money, was large in results. So Thom is far from an unfortunate man, though the portrait which we find in his book is marked with wrinkles of such premature depth. Indeed he declares that while work was plenty and his wife with him, he was blest for "nine years with such happiness as rarely falls to the lot of a human being."

Thom has a poetical mind, rather than is a poet. He has a delicate perception of relations, and is more a poet in discerning good occasions for poems than in using them. Accordingly his prefaces to, or notes upon, his verses, are often, as was the case with Sir Walter Scott, far more poetical than the verses them-

selves. This is the case as to those which followed this little sketch :

“For a period of seventeen years, I was employed in a great weaving factory in Aberdeen. It contained upwards of three hundred looms, worked by as many male and female weavers. 'Twas a sad place, indeed, and many a curiosity sort of man and woman entered that blue gate. Amongst the rest, that little sly fellow Cupid would steal past ‘Willie, the porter’ (who never dreamed of such a being)—steal in amongst us, and make a very harvest of it. Upon the remembrance of one of his rather grave doings, the song of ‘Mary’ is composed. One of our shopmates, a virtuous young woman, fairly though unconsciously, carried away the whole bulk and value of a poor weaver’s heart. He became restless and miserable, but could never muster spirit to speak his flame. “*He never told his love*”—yes, he told it to me. At his request, I told it to Mary, and she laughed. Five weeks passed away, and I saw him to the churchyard. For many days ere he died, Mary watched by his bedside, a sorrowful woman, indeed. Never did widow’s tears fall more burningly. It is twenty years since then. She is now a wife and a mother; but the remembrance of that, their last meeting, still haunts her sensitive nature, as if she had done a deed of blood.”

The charming little description of one of the rural academies known by the name of a “Wife’s Squeel,” we reserve to reprint in another connexion.—As we are overstepping all limits, we shall give, in place of farther comments, three specimens of how the Muse sings while she throws a shuttle. They are all interesting in different ways. “One of the Heart’s Struggles” is a faithful transcript of the refined feelings of the craftsman, how opposite to the vulgar selfishness which so often profanes the name of Love! “A Chieftain Unknown to the Queen,” expresses many thoughts that arose in our own mind as we used to read the bulletins of the Royal Progress through Scotland so carefully transferred to the columns of American journals. “Whisper Low” is perhaps the best specimen of song as song, to be found in this volume.

PRINCE'S POEMS.

By signs too numerous to be counted, yet some of them made fruitful by specification, the Spirit of the Age announces that she is slowly, toilsomely, but surely, working that revolution, whose mighty deluge rolling back, shall leave a new aspect smiling on earth to greet the 'most ancient heavens.' The wave rolls forward slowly, and may be as long in retreating, but when it has retired into the eternal deep, it will leave behind it a refreshed world, in which there may still be many low and mean men, but *no lower classes*; for it will be understood that it is the glory of a man to labour, and that all kinds of labour have their poetry, and that there is really no more a lower and higher among the world of men with their various spheres, than in the world of stars. All kinds of labour are equally honorable, if the mind of the labourer be only open so to understand them. But as

"The glory 'tis of Man's estate,—
 For this his dower did he receive,
 That he in mind should contemplate
 What with his hands he doth achieve."

* * * * *

"Observe we sharply, then, what vantage,
 From conflux of weak efforts springs;
 He turns his craft to small advantage
 Who knows not what to light it brings."

It is this that *has* made the difference of high and low, that certain occupations were supposed to have a better influence in liberalizing and refining the higher faculties than others. Now, the tables are turning. The inferences and impressions to be gained from the pursuits that have ranked highest are, for the present, exhausted. They have been written about, prated about, till they have had their day, and need to lie in the shadow and recruit their energies through silence. The mind of the time has detected the

truth that as there is nothing, the least, effected in this universe, which does not somehow represent the whole, which it is again the whole scope and effort of human Intelligence to do, no deed, no pursuit can fail, if the mind be 'divinely intended' upon it, to communicate divine knowledge. Thus it is seen that all a man needs for his education is to take whatsoever lies in his way to do, and do it with his might, and think about it with his might, too ; for

"He turns his craft to small advantage,
Who knows not what to light it brings."

And, as a mark of this diffusion of the true, the poetic, the philosophic education, we greet the emergence more and more of poets from the working classes—men who not only have poet hearts and eyes, but use them to write and print verses.

Beranger, the man of the people, is the greatest poet, and, in fact, the greatest literary genius of modern France. In other nations if "the lower classes" have not such an one to boast, they at least have many buds and shoots of new talent. Not to speak of the patronized ploughboys and detected merits, they have now an order, constantly increasing, able to live by the day labor of that good right hand which wields the pen at night ; with aims, thoughts, feelings of their own, neither borrowing from nor aspiring to the region of the Rich and Great. Elliott, Nicol, Prince, and Thom find enough in the hedge-rows that border their everyday path ;—they need not steal an entrance to padlocked flower-gardens, nor orchards guarded by man-traps and spring-guns.

Of three of these it may be said, they

"Were cradled into Poesy by Wrong,
And learnt in Suffering what they taught in Song."

But of the fourth—Prince, we mean—though he indeed suffered enough of the severest hardships of work-day life, the extreme hardships of life when work could not be got, yet he was no flint that needed such hard blows to strike out the fire, but an easily

bubbling naphtha-spring that would have burned much the same, through whatever soil it had reached the open air.

He was born of the poorest laboring people, taught to read and write imperfectly only by means of the Sunday Schools, discouraged in any taste for books by his father lest his time, if any portion were that way bestowed, should not suffice to win his bread,—with no friends of the mind, in youthful years, except a volume of Byron, and an old German who loved to tell stories of his native land ;—married at nineteen, in the hope of mingling some solace with his cup ; plunged by the birth of children into deeper want, going forth to foreign lands a beggar in search of employment, returning to his own country to be received as a pauper, having won nothing but mental treasure which no man wished to buy ; he found his wife and children in the workhouse, and took them thence *home* to lie with him on straw in an unfurnished garret. Thus passed the first half of the span allotted on earth to one made in God's image. And during those years Prince constantly wrote into verse how such things struck him. But we cannot say that his human experiences were deep ; for all these things, that would have tortured other men, only pained him superficially. Into the soul of Elliott, the iron has entered ; the lightest song of Beranger echoes to a melancholy sense of the defects of this world with its Tantalus destinies, a melancholy which touches it at times with celestial pathos. But life has made but little impression on Prince. Endowed by Nature with great purity of instincts, a healthy vigor of feeling more than of thought, he sees, and expresses in all his works, the happiness natural to Man. He sees him growing, gently, gradually, with no more of struggle and labour than is wanted to develope his manly strength, learning his best self from the precious teachings of domestic affections, fully and intelligently the son, the lover, the husband, the father. He sees him walking amid the infinite fair shows of Nature, kingly, yet companionable, too. He sees him offering to

his God no sacrifice of blood and tears, whether others' or his own, but the incense of a grateful and obedient heart, ever ready for love and good works.

It is this childishness, rather this virginity of soul, that makes Prince's poems remarkable. He has no high poetic power, not even a marked individuality of expression. There are no lines, verses, or images that strike by themselves; neither human nor external nature are described so as to make the mind of the poet foster-father to its subject. The poems are only easy expression of the common mood of a healthy mind and tender heart, which needs to vent itself in words and metres. Every body should be able to write as good verse,—every body has the same simple, substantial things to put into it. On such a general basis the high constructive faculty, the imagination, might rear her palaces, unafraid of ruin from war or time.

This being the case with Prince, we shall not make detailed remarks upon his poems, but merely substantiate what we have said by some extracts.

1st. We give the description of his Journey and Return. This, to us, presents a delightful picture; the man is so sufficient to himself and his own improvement; so unconquerably sweet and happy.

2d. The poem 'Land and Sea,' as giving a true presentment of the riches of this poor man.

3d. A poem to his Child, showing how a pure and refined sense of the beauty and value of these relations, often unknown in palaces, may make a temple of an unfurnished garret.

4th. In an extract from 'A Vision of the Future,' a presentation of the life fit for man, as seen by a 'reed-maker for weavers;' such as we doubt Mrs. Norton's Child of the Islands would not have vigor and purity of mental sense even to sympathize with, when conceived, far less to conceive.

These extracts speak for themselves; they show the stream of

the poet's mind to be as clear as if it had flowed over the sands of Pactolus. But most waters show the color of the soil through which they had to *force* their passage ; this is the case with Elliott, and with Thom, of whose writings we shall soon give some notice.

Prince is an unique, as we sometimes find a noble Bayard, born of a worldly statesman—a sweet shepherdess or nun, of a heartless woman of fashion. Such characters are the direct gift of Heaven, and symbolize nothing in what is now called Society.

THE CHILD OF THE ISLANDS : By the Hon. Mrs. NORTON. London : Chapman and Hull. 1845.

HOURS WITH THE MUSES : By JOHN CRITCHLEY PRINCE. Second Edition. London. Simpkin, Marshall & Co. 1841.

THE *Hon.* Mrs. Norton and Prince, “a reed-maker for weavers,” meet upon a common theme—the existing miseries and possible relief of that most wretched body, England's poor : most wretched of the world's sufferers in being worse mocked by pretensions of freedom and glory, most wretched in having minds more awakened to feel their wretchedness.

Mrs. Norton and Prince meet on the same ground, but in strongly contrasted garb and expression, as might be expected from the opposite quarters from which they come. Prince takes this truly noble motto :

“ Knowledge and Truth and Virtue were his theme,
And lofty hopes of Liberty divine.”—*Shelley*.

Mrs. Norton prefaces a poem on a subject of such sorrowful earnestness, and in which she calls the future sovereign of a groaning land to thought upon his duties, with this weak wish couched in the verse of Moore :

“As, half in shade and half in sun,
This world along its course advances,
May that side the sun's upon
Be all that shall ever meet thy glances.”

Thus unconsciously showing her state of mind. It is a very different wish that a good friend, ‘let alone’ a good angel, would proffer to the Prince of Wales at this moment. Shame indeed will it be for him if he *does* wish to stand in the sun, while the millions that he ought to spend all his blood to benefit are shivering in the cold and dark. The position of the heirs of fortune in that country, under present circumstances, is one of dread, which to a noble soul would bring almost the anguish of crucifixion. How can they enjoy one moment in peace the benefit of their possessions? And how can they give them up, and be sure it will be any benefit to others? The causes of ill seem so deeply rooted in the public economy of England, that, if all her rich men were to sell all they have and give to the poor, it would yield but a temporary relief. Yea! all those heaped-up gems, the Court array of England's beauty; the immense treasures of art, enough to arouse old Greece from her grave; the stately parks, full of dewy glades and bosky dells, haunted by the stately deer and still more thickly by exquisite memories; the enormous wealth of episcopal palaces, might all be given up for the good of the people at large, and not relieve their sufferings ten years. It is not merely that sense of right usually dignified by the name of generosity that is wanted, but wisdom—a deeper wisdom by far as to the conduct of national affairs than the world has ever yet known. It is not enough now for prince or noble to be awakened to good dispositions. Let him not hope at once to be able to do good with the best dispositions; things have got too far from health and simplicity for that; the return must be tedious, and whoever sets out on that path must resign himself to be a patient student, with a painfully studying world for his com-

panion. In work he can for a long time hope no shining results ; the miners dig in the dark as yet for the ransom of the suffering million.

Hard is the problem for the whole civilized world at present, hard for bankrupt Europe, hard for endangered America. We say bankrupt Europe, for surely nations are so who have not known how to secure peace, education, or even bodily sustenance for the people at large. The lightest lore of fairy tale is wise enough to show that such nations must be considered bankrupt, notwithstanding the accumulation of wealth, the development of resources, the prodigies of genius and science they have to boast. Some successes have been achieved, but at what a price of blood and tears, of error and of crime !

And, in this hard school-time, hardest must be the lot of him who has outward advantages above the rest, and yet is at all awakened to the wants of all. Has he mind ? how shall he learn ? time—how employ it ? means—where apply them ? The poor little “trapper,” kept in the dark at his automaton task twelve hours a day, has an easy and happy life before him, compared with the prince on the throne, if that prince possesses a conscience that can be roused, a mind that can be developed.

The position of such a prince is indicated in the following extract which we take from the *Schnellpost*. Laube says in his late work, called “Three royal cities of the North,” “King Oscar still lives in the second story of the castle at Stockholm, where he lived when he was crowned prince. He was out, and his dressing gown thrown upon an elbow chair before the writing table : all was open, showing how he was occupied. I found among the books, that seemed in present use, many in German, among them the “*Staats Lexicon*,” “*Julius upon Prisons*,” “*Rotteck’s History of the World*.” It is well known that King Oscar is especially interested in studies for the advantage of the most unhappy classes of citizens, the poor and the prisoners, and

has, himself, written upon the subject. His apartment shows domestic habits like those of a writer. No fine library full of books left to accumulate dust, but what he wants, chosen with judgment, ready for use around him. A hundred little things showed what should be the modern kingly character, at home in the intellectual life of our time, earnest for a general culture. Every thing in his simple arrangements showed the manly democratic prince. He is up, early and late, attending with zealous conscientiousness to the duties of his office."

Such a life should England's prince live, and then he would be only one of the many virtuous seekers, with a better chance to try experiments. The genius of the time is working through myriad organs, speaking through myriad mouths, but condescends chiefly to men of low estate. She is spelling a new and sublime spell ; its first word we know is *brotherhood*, but that must be well pronounced and learnt *by heart* before we shall hear another so clearly. One thing is obvious, we must cease to worship princes even in genius. The greatest geniuses will in this day rank themselves as the chief servants only. It is not even the most exquisite, the highest, but rather the largest and deepest experience that can serve us. The Prince of Wales, like his poetess, will not be so able a servant on account of the privileges she so gracefully enumerates and cannot persuade herself are not blessings. But they will keep him, as they have kept her, farther from the truth and knowledge wanted than he would have been in a less sheltered position.

Yet we sympathize with Mrs. Norton in her appeal. *Every boy should* be a young prince ; since it is not so, in the present distorted state of society, it is natural to select some one cherished object as the heir to our hopes. Children become the angels of a better future to all who attain middle age without losing from the breast that chief jewel, the idea of what man and life should be. They must do what we hoped to do, but find time, strength,

perhaps even spirit, failing. They show not yet their limitations ; in their eyes shines an infinite hope ; we can imagine it realized in their lives, and this consoles us for the deficiencies in our own, for the soul, though demanding the beautiful and good every where, can yet be consoled if it is found some where. 'Tis an illusion to look for it in these children more than in ourselves, but it is one we seem to need, being the second strain of the music that cheers our fatiguing march through this part of the scene of life.

There was a good deal of *prestige* about Queen Victoria's coming to the throne. She was young, "and had what in a princess might be styled beauty." She wept lest she should not reign wisely, and that seemed as if she might. Many hoped she might prove another Elizabeth, with more heart, using the privileges of the woman, her high feeling, sympathy, tact and quick penetration in unison with, and as corrective of, the advice of experienced statesmen. We hoped she would be a mother to the country. But she has given no signs of distinguished character ; her walk seems a private one. She is a fashionable lady and the mother of a family. We hope she may prove the mother of a good prince, but it will not do to wait for him ; the present generation must do all it can. If he does no harm, it is more than is reasonable to expect from a prince—does no harm and is the keystone to keep the social arch from falling into ruins till the time be ripe to construct a better in its stead.

Mrs. Norton, addressing herself to the Child of the Islands, goes through the circling seasons of the year and finds plenty of topics in their changes to subserve her main aim. This is to awaken the rich to their duty. And, though the traces of her education are visible, and weak prejudices linger among newly awakened thoughts, yet, on the whole, she shows a just sense of the relationship betwixt man and man, and musically doth she proclaim her creed in the lines beginning

The stamps of imperfection rests on all
Our human intellect has power to plan.

After an eloquent enumeration of the difficulties that beset our path and our faith, she concludes—

Lo! out of chaos was the world first called,
And Order out of blank Disorder came,
The feebly-toiling heart that shrinks appalled,
In dangers weak, in difficulties tame,
Hath lost the spark of that creative flame
Dimly permitted still on earth to burn,
Working out slowly Order's perfect frame;
Distributed to those whose souls can learn,
As labourers under God, His task-work to discern.

“To discern,” ay! that is what is needed. Only these “labourers under God” have that clearness of mind that is needed, and though in the present time they walk as men in a subterranean passage where the lamp sheds its light only a little way onward, yet that light suffices to keep their feet from stumbling while they seek an outlet to the blessed day.

The above presents a fair specimen of the poem. As poetry it is inferior to her earlier verses, where, without pretension to much thought, or commanding view, Mrs. Norton expressed simply the feelings of the girl and the woman. Willis has described them well in one of the most touching of his poems, as being a tale

—“of feelings which in me are cold,
But ah! with what a passionate sweetness told!”

The best passages in the present poem are personal, as where a mother's feelings are expressed in speaking of infants and young children, recollections of a Scotch Autumn, and the description of the imprisoned gipsey.*

* This extract was inserted in the original notice, but must be omitted here for want of room.

In the same soft and flowing style, and with the same unstudied fidelity to nature, is the grief of the gipsey husband painted when he comes and finds her dead. After the first fury of rage and despair is spent, he "weepeth like a child"—

And many a day by many a sunny bank,
Or forest pond, close fringed with rushes dank,
He wails, his clench'd hands on his eyelids prest;
Or by lone hedges, where the grass grows rank,
Stretched prone, as travelers deem, in idle rest,
Mourns for that murdered girl, the dove of his wild nest.

To such passages the woman's heart lends the rhetoric.

Generally the poem is written with considerable strength, in a good style, sustained, and sufficiently adorned, by the flowers of feeling. It shows an expansion of mind highly honourable to a lady placed as Mrs. Norton has been, and for which she, no doubt, is much indebted to her experience of sorrow. She has felt the need of faith and hope, of an enlargement of sympathy. The poem may be read through at once and without fatigue; this is much to say for an ethical poem, filling a large volume. It is, however, chiefly indebted for its celebrity to the circumstances of its authorship. A beautiful lady, celebrated in aristocratic circles, joins the democratic movement, now so widely spreading in light literature, and men hail the fact as a sign of the times. The poem is addressed to the "upper classes," and, even from its defects, calculated to win access to their minds. Its outward garb, too, is suited to attract their notice. The book is simply but beautifully got up, the two stanzas looking as if written for the page they fill, and in a pre-existent harmony with the frame-work and margin. There is only one ugly thing, and that frightfully ugly, the design for the frontispiece by Maclise. The Child of the Islands, represented by an infant form to whose frigid awkwardness there is no correspondence in the most degraded models that can be found in Nature for that age, with the

tamest of angels kneeling at his head and feet, angels that have not spirit and sweetness enough to pray away a fly, forms the centre. Around him are other figures of whom it is impossible to say whether they are goblins or fairies, come to curse or bless. The accessories are as bad as the main group, mean in conception, tame in execution. And the subject admitted of so beautiful and noble an illustration by Art! We marvel that a person of so refined taste as Mrs. Norton, and so warmly engaged in the subject, should have admitted this to its companionship.

We intended to have given some account of Prince and his poems, in this connection, but must now wait till another number, for we have spread our words over too much space already.

MISS BARRETT'S POEMS.

A DRAMA OF EXILE: AND OTHER POEMS. By ELIZABETH B. BARRETT, author of THE SERAPHIM AND OTHER POEMS. New-York: Henry G. Langley, No. 8 Astor House, 1845

WHAT happiness for the critic when, as in the present instance, his task is, mainly, how to express a cordial admiration; to indicate an intelligence of beauties, rather than regret for defects!

We have read these volumes with feelings of delight far warmer than the writer, in her sincerely modest preface, would seem to expect from any reader, and cannot hesitate to rank her, in vigour and nobleness of conception, depth of spiritual experience, and command of classic allusion, above any female writer the world has yet known.

In the first quality, especially, most female writers are deficient. They do not grasp a subject with simple energy, nor treat it with decision of touch. They are, in general, most remarkable for delicacy of feeling, and brilliancy or grace in manner.

In delicacy of perception, Miss Barrett may vie with any of her sex. She has what is called a true woman's heart, although we must believe that men of a fine conscience and good organization will have such a heart no less. Signal instances occur to us in the cases of Spenser, Wordsworth and Tennyson. The woman who reads them will not find hardness or blindness as to the subtler workings of thoughts and affections.

If men are often deficient on this score; women, on the other hand, are apt to pay excessive attention to the slight tokens, the

little things of life. Thus, in conduct or writing, they tend to weary us by a morbid sentimentalism. From this fault Miss Barrett is wholly free. Personal feeling is in its place ; enlightened by Reason, ennobled by Imagination. The earth is no despised resting place for the feet, the heaven bends wide above, rich in starry hopes, and the air flows around exhilarating and free.

The mournful, albeit we must own them tuneful, sisters of the lyre might hush many of their strains at this clear note from one who has felt and conquered the same difficulties.

PERPLEXED MUSIC.

"Experience, like a pale musician, holds
A dulcimer of patience in his hand:
Whence harmonies we cannot understand
Of God's will in his worlds the strain unfolds,
In sad perplexed minors. Deathly colds
Fall on us while we hear and countermand
Our sanguine heart back from the fancy land,
With nightingales in visionary wolds.
We murmur—'Where is any certain tune,
Or measured music in such notes as these?'
But angels leaning from the golden seat,
Are not so minded; their fine ear hath won
The issue of completed cadences;
And smiling down the stars, they whisper—SWEET."

We are accustomed now to much verse on moral subjects, such as follows the lead of Wordsworth and seeks to arrange moral convictions as melodies on the harp. But these tones are never deep, unless the experience of the poet, in the realms of intellect and emotion, be commensurate with his apprehension of truth. Wordsworth moves us when he writes an "Ode to Duty," or "Dion," because he could also write "Ruth," and the exquisitely tender poems on Matthew, in whom nature

"—for a favorite child
Had tempered so the clay,

That every hour the heart ran wild,
Yet never went astray."

The trumpet call of Luther's 'Judgment Hymn' sounds from the depths of a nature capable of all human emotions, or it could not make the human ear vibrate as it does. The calm convictions expressed by Miss Barrett in the sonnets come with poetic force, because she was also capable of writing 'The Lost Bower,' 'The Romaunt of the Page,' 'Loved Once,' 'Bertha in the Lane,' and 'A Lay of the Early Rose.' These we select as the finest of the tender poems.

In the 'Drama of Exile' and the 'Vision of Poets,' where she aims at a Miltonic flight or Dantesque grasp—not in any spirit of rivalry or imitation, but because she is really possessed of a similar mental scope—her success is far below what we find in the poems of feeling and experience; for she has the vision of a great poet, but little in proportion of his plastic power. She is at home in the Universe; she sees its laws; she sympathises with its motions. She has the imagination all compact—the healthy archetypal plant from which all forms may be divined, and, so far as now existent, understood. Like Milton, she sees the angelic hosts in real presence; like Dante, she hears the spherul concords and shares the planetary motions. But she cannot, like Milton, marshal the angels so near the earth as to impart the presence other than by sympathy. He who is near her level of mind may, through the magnetic sympathy, see the angels with her. Others will feel only the grandeur and sweetness she expresses in these forms. Still less can she, like Dante, give, by a touch, the key which enables ourselves to play on the same instrument. She is singularly deficient in the power of compression. There are always far more words and verses than are needed to convey the meaning, and it is a great proof of her strength, that the thought still seems strong, when arrayed in a form so Briarean clumsy and many-handed.

We compare her with those great poets, though we have read her preface and see how sincerely she deprecates any such comparison, not merely because her theme is the same as theirs, but because, as we must again repeat, her field of vision and nobleness of conception are such, that we cannot forbear trying her by the same high standard to see what she lacks.

Of the "Drama of Exile" and other poems of the same character, we may say that we shall never read them again, but we are very glad to have read them once, to see how the grand mysteries look to her, to share with her the conception and outline of what would, in the hands of a more powerful artist, have come forth a great poem. Our favorite, above anything we have read of hers, is the "Rhyme of the Duchess May," equally admirable in thought and execution, in poetic meaning and romantic grace.

Were there room here, it should be inserted, as a sufficient evidence of the writer's high claims; but it is too long, and does not well bear being broken. The touches throughout are fine and forcible, but they need the unison of the whole to give them their due effect.

Most of these poems have great originality in the thought and the motive powers. It is these, we suppose, that have made "The Brown Rosarie" so popular. It has long been handed about in manuscript, and hours have been spent in copying it, which would have been spared if the publication of these volumes in America had been expected so soon. It does not please us so well as many of the others. The following, for instance, is just as original, full of grace, and, *almost*, perfectly simple :

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.*

How sweetly natural ! and how distinct is the picture of the

* Several poems mentioned in these articles, and published in the first instance, are omitted now on account of their length.

little girl, as she sits by the brook. The poem cannot fail to charm all who have treasured the precious memories of their own childhood, and remember how romance was there interwoven with reality.

Miss Barrett makes many most fair and distinct pictures, such as this of the Duchess May at the fatal moment when her lord's fortress was giving way :

Low she dropt her head and lower, till her hair coiled on the floor.

Toll slowly!

And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any word

Which you might be listening for.

"Get thee in, thou soft ladie!—here is never a place for thee."

Toll slowly!

"Braid thy hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its moan

May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,

Toll slowly!

Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems to look

Right against the thunder-place,

And her feet trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside.

Toll slowly!

Go to, faithful friends, go to!—Judge no more what ladies do,

No, nor how their lords may ride.

and so on. There are passages in that poem beyond praise.

Here are descriptions as fine of another sort of person from

LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP.

Her foot upon the new-mown grass—bareheaded—with the flowing

Of the virginal white vesture, gathered closely to her throat;

With the golden ringlets in her neck, just quickened by her going,

And appearing to breathe sun for air, and doubting if to float,—

With a branch of dewy maple, which her right hand held above her,

And which trembled a green shadow in betwixt her and the skies,—

As she turned her face in going, thus she drew me on to love her,

And to study the deep meaning of the smile hid in her eyes.

For her eyes alone smiled constantly : her lips had serious sweetness,
 And her front was calm—the dimple rarely rippled on her cheek :
 But her deep blue eyes smiled constantly,—as if they had by fitness
 Won the secret of a happy dream, she did not care to speak.

How fine are both the descriptive and critical touches in the following passage :

Ay, and sometimes on the hill-side, while we sat down in the gowans,
 With the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before ;
 And the river running under ; and across it, from the rowens,
 A brown partridge whirring near us, till we felt the air it bore—

There, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems
 Made by Tuscan flutes, or instruments, more various, of our own ;
 Read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtle interflowings
 Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book—the leaf is folded down !

Or at times a modern volume—Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted idyl,
 Howitt's ballad-dew, or Tennyson's god-vocal reverie,—
 Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep down the middle,
 Shows a heart within, blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity.

Or I read there, sometimes, hoarsely, some new poem of my making—
 Oh, your poets never read their own best verses to their worth,
 For the echo, in you, breaks upon the words which you are speaking,
 And the chariot-wheels jar in the gate through which you drive them forth.

After, when we were grown tired of books, the silence round us flinging
 A slow arm of sweet compression, felt with beatings at the breast,—
 She would break out, on a sudden, in a gush of woodland singing,
 Like a child's emotion in a god—a naiad tired of rest.

Oh, to see or hear her singing ! scarce I know which is divinest—
 For her looks sing too—she modulates her gestures on the tune ;
 And her mouth stirs with the song, like song ; and when the notes are finest,
 'Tis the eyes that shoot out vocal light, and seem to swell them on.

Then we talked—oh, how we talked ! her voice so cadenced in the talking,
 Made another singing—of the soul ! a music without bars—
 While the leafy sounds of woodlands, humming round where we were walking,
 Brought interposition worthy-sweet,—as skies about the stars.

And she spake such good thoughts natural, as if she always thought them—
And had sympathies so ready, open-free like bird on branch,
Just as ready to fly east as west, which ever way besought them,
In the birchen wood a chirrup, or a cock-crow in the grange.

In her utmost lightness there is truth—and often she speaks lightly;
And she has a grace in being gay, which mourners even approve;
For the root of some grave earnest thought is understruck so rightly,
As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above."

We must copy yet one other poem to give some idea of the range of Miss Barrett's power.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

If it be said that the poetry, the tragedy here is in the facts, yet how rare is it to find a mind that can both feel and upbear such facts.

We have already said, that, as a poet, Miss Barrett is deficient in plastic energy, and that she is diffuse. We must add many blemishes of overstrained and constrained thought and expression. The ways in which words are coined or forced from their habitual meanings does not carry its excuse with it. We find no gain that compensates the loss of elegance and simplicity. One practice which has already had its censors of using the adjective for the noun, as in the cases of "The cry of the Human," "Leaning from the Golden," we, also, find offensive, not only to the habitual tastes, but to the sympathies of the very mood awakened by the writer.

We hear that she has long been an invalid, and, while the knowledge of this increases admiration for her achievements and delight at the extent of the influence,—so much light flowing from the darkness of the sick room,—we seem to trace injurious results, too. There is often a want of pliant and glowing life. The sun does not always warm the marble. We have spoken of the great book culture of this mind. We must now say that this culture is too great in proportion to that it has received from

actual life. The lore is not always assimilated to the new form ; the illustrations sometimes impede the attention rather than help its course ; and we are too much and too often reminded of other minds and other lives.

Great variety of metres are used, and with force and facility. But they have not that deep music which belongs to metres which are the native growth of the poet's mind. In that case, others may have used them, but we feel that, if they had not, he must have invented them ; that they are original with him. Miss Barrett is more favoured by the grand and thoughtful, than by the lyric muse.

We have thus pointed out all the faults we could find in Miss Barrett, feeling that her strength and nobleness deserves this act of high respect. She has no need of leniency, or caution. The best comment upon such critiques may be made by subjoining this paragraph from her Preface :

"If it were not presumptuous language on the lips of one to whom life is more than usually uncertain, my favourite wish for this work would be, that it be received by the public as a deposit, ambitious of approaching to the nature of a security for a future offering of more value and acceptability. I would fain do better, and I feel as if I might do better : I aspire to do better. In any case, my poems, while full of faults, as I go forward to my critics and confess, have my life and heart in them. They are not empty shells. If it must be said of me that I have contributed unworthy verses, I also to the many rejected by the age, it cannot, at least be said that I have done so in a light or irresponsible spirit. Poetry has been as serious a thing to me as life itself ; and life has been a very serious thing ; there has been no playing at skittles for me in either. I never mistook pleasure for the final cause of poetry ; nor leisure, for the hour of the poet. I have done my work, so far, as work ; not as mere hand and head work apart from the personal being, but as the completest expression of that being to which I could attain ; and, as work, I offer it to the public, feeling its faultiness more deeply than any of my readers, because measured from the height of my aspiration, but feeling also that the reverence and sincerity with which the work was done should protect it in the thoughts of the reverent and sincere."

Of the greatest of Grecian sages it was said that he acquired such power over the lower orders of nature, through his purity and intelligence, that wild beasts were abashed and reformed by his admonitions, and that, once, when walking abroad with his disciples, he called down the white eagle, soaring above him, and drew from her willing wing a quill for his use.

We have seen women use with skill and grace, the practical goose-quill, the sentimental crow-quill, and even the lyrical, the consecrated feathers of the swan. But we have never seen one to whom the white eagle would have descended ; and, for a while, were inclined to think that the hour had now, for the first time, arrived. But, upon full deliberation, we will award to Miss Barrett one from the wing of the sea-gull. That is also a white bird, rapid, soaring, majestic, and which can alight with ease, and poise itself upon the stormiest wave.

BROWNING'S POEMS.

ROBERT BROWNING is scarcely known in this country, as, indeed, in his own, his fame can spread but slowly, from the nature of his works. On this very account,—of the peculiarity of his genius,—we are desirous to diffuse the knowledge that there is such a person, thinking and writing, so that those who, here and there, need just him, and not another, may know where to turn.

Our first acquaintance with this subtle and radiant mind was through his “Paracelsus,” of which we cannot now obtain a copy, and must write from a distant memory.

It is one of those attempts, that illustrate the self-consciousness of this age, to represent the fever of the soul pining to embrace the secret of the universe in a single trance. Men who are once seized with this fever, carry thought upon the heart as a cross, instead of finding themselves daily warmed and enlightened to more life and joy by the sacred fire to which their lives daily bring fresh fuel.

Sometimes their martyrdoms greatly avail, as to positive achievements of knowledge for their own good and that of all men; but, oftener, they only enrich us by experience of the temporary limitations of the mind, and the inutility of seeking to transcend, instead of working within them.

Of this desire, to seize at once as a booty what it was intended we should legitimately win by gradual growth, alchemy and the *elixir vitæ* were, in the middle ages, apt symbols. In seeking how to prolong life, men wasted its exquisite spring-time and

splendid summer, lost the clues they might have gained by initiation to the mysteries of the present existence. They sought to make gold in crucibles, through study of the laws which govern the material world, while within them was a crucible and a fire beneath it, which only needed watching, in faith and purity, and they would have turned all substances to treasure, which neither moth nor rust could corrupt.

Paracelsus had one of those soaring ambitions that sought the stars and built no nest amid the loves or lures of life. Incapable of sustaining himself in angelic force and purity, he tainted, after a while, his benefits, by administering them with the arts of a charlatan, seeking too ambitiously the mastery of life, he missed its best instructions.

Yet he who means nobleness, though he misses his chosen aim, cannot fail to bring down a precious quarry from the clouds. Paracelsus won deep knowledge of himself and his God. Love followed, if it could not bless him, and the ecstasies of genius wove music into his painful dreams.

The holy and domestic love of Michal, that *Ave Maria Stella* of his stormy life, the devotion of a friend, who living, for himself, in the humility of a genuine priest, yet is moved by the pangs of sympathy, to take part against and "wrestle with" Heaven in his behalf, the birth and bud of the creative spirit which blesses through the fulness of forms, as expressed in *Aprile*, all are told with a beauty and, still more, a pregnancy, unsurpassed amid the works of contemporary minds.

"Sordello" we have never seen, and have been much disappointed at not being able to obtain the loan of a copy now existent in New England. It is spoken of as a work more thickly enveloped in refined obscurities than ever any other that really had a meaning; and no one acquainted with Browning's mind can doubt his always having a valuable meaning, though sometimes we may not be willing to take the degree of trouble necessary to

ferret it out. His writings have, till lately, been clouded by obscurities, his riches having seemed to accumulate beyond his mastery of them. So beautiful are the picture gleams, so full of meaning the little thoughts that are always twisting their parasites over his main purpose, that we hardly can bear to wish them away, even when we know their excess to be a defect. They seem, each and all, too good to be lopped away, and we cannot wonder the mind from which they grew was at a loss which to reject. Yet, a higher mastery in the poetic art must give him skill and resolution to reject them. Then, all true life being condensed into the main growth, instead of being so much scattered in tendrils, off-shoots and flower-bunches, the effect would be more grand and simple; nor should we be any loser as to the spirit; it would all be there, only more concentrated as to the form, more full, if less subtle, in its emanations. The tendency to variety and delicacy, rather than to a grasp of the subject and concentration of interest, are not so obvious in Browning's minor works as in *Paracelsus*, and in his tragedy of 'Strafford.' This very difficult subject for tragedy engaged, at about the same time, the attention of Sterling. Both he and Browning seem to have had it brought before their attention by Foster's spirited biography of Strafford. We say it is difficult—though we see how it tempted the poets to dramatic enterprise. The main character is one of tragic force and majesty; the cotemporary agents all splendid figures, and of marked individuality; the march of action necessarily rapid and imposing; the events induced of universal interest. But the difficulty is, that the materials are even too rich and too familiar to every one. We cannot bear any violation of reality, any straining of the common version of this story. Then the character and position of Strafford want that moral interest which is needed to give full pathos to the catastrophe. We admire his greatness of mind and character, we loathe the weakness and treachery of the King; we dislike the stern

hunters, notwithstanding their patriotic motives, for pursuing to the death the noble stag; and yet we feel he ought to die. We wish that he had been killed, not by the hands of men, with their spotted and doubtful feelings, but smitten direct by pure fire from heaven. Still we feel he ought to die, and our grief wants the true tragic element which hallows it in the *Antigone*, the *Lear*, and even Schiller's "*Mary Stuart*," or "*Wallenstein*."

But of the two, Sterling's conception of the character and conduct of the drama is far superior to that of Browning. Both dramas are less interesting and effective than the simple outline history gives, but Browning weakens the truth in his representation of it, while Sterling at least did not falsify the character of Strafford, bitter, ruthlessly ambitious, but strong and majestic throughout. Browning loses, too, his accustomed originality and grace in the details of this work, through a misplaced ambition.

But believing that our poet has not reached that epoch of mastery, when he can do himself full justice in a great work, we would turn rather to the consideration of a series of sketches, dramatic and lyric, which he has been publishing for several years, under the title of "*Bells and Pomegranates*." We do not know whether this seemingly affected title is assumed in conformity with the catch-penny temper of the present day, or whether these be really in the mind of Robert Browning no more than the glittering fringe of his priestly garment. If so, we shall cherish high hopes, indeed, as to the splendors that will wait upon the unfolding of the main vesture.

The plan of these sketches is original, the execution in many respects, admirable, and the range of talent and perception they display, wider than that of any contemporary poet in England.

"*Pippa Passes*" is the title of the first of these little two shilling volumes, which seem to contain just about as much as a man who lives wisely, might, after a good summer of mingled

work, business and pleasure, have to offer to the world, as the honey he could spare from his hive.

Pippa is a little Italian girl who works in a silk mill. Once a year the workpeople in these mills have an entire day given them for their pleasure. She is introduced at sunrise of such a day, singing her morning thoughts. She then goes forth to wander through the town, singing her little songs of childish gayety and purity. She passes, not through, but by, different scenes of life, passes by a scene of guilty pleasure, by the conspiracies of the malicious, by the cruel undeception of the young sculptor who had dared trust his own heart more fully than is the wont of the corrupt and cautious world. Every where the notes of her song pierce their walls and windows, awakening them to memories of innocence and checking the course of misdeed. The plan of this work is, it will be seen, at once rich and simple. It admits of an enchanting variety, and an unobtrusive unity. Browning has made the best use of its advantages. The slides in the magic lantern succeed one another with perfect distinctness, but, through them all shines the light of this one beautiful Italian day, and the little silk winder, its angel, discloses to us as fine gleams of garden, stream and sky, as we have time to notice while passing such various and interesting groups of human beings.

The finest sketch of these is that of Jules, the sculptor, and his young bride. Jules, like many persons of a lofty mould, in the uncompromising fervour of youth, makes all those among his companions whom he thinks weak, base and vicious, his enviers and bitter enemies. A set of such among his fellow-students have devised this most wicked plan to break his heart and pride at once. They write letters as from a maiden who has distinguished him from the multitude, and knows how to sympathize with all his tastes and aims. They buy of her mother a beautiful young girl who is to represent the character. The letters

alliance, and when Jules, enchanted by the union of the beauty of intellect in the letters and the beauty of person of which he has gained glimpses, presses his suit as a lover, marriage is consented to on condition that he shall not seek to converse with her till after the ceremony. This is the first talk of Jules after he has brought his silent bride to his studio :

Thou by me

And I by thee—this is thy hand in mine—

And side by side we sit—all's true. Thank God !

I have spoken—speak thou !

—O, my life to come !

My 'Tydeus must be carved that's there in clay,

And how be carved with you about the chamber ?

Where must I place you ? When I think that once

This room full of rough block-work seemed my heaven

Without you ! Shall I ever work again—

Get fairly into my old ways again—

Bid each conception stand while trait by trait

My hand transfers its linaments to stone ?

Will they, my fancies, live near you, my truth—

The live truth—passing and repassing me—

Sitting beside me ?

—Now speak !

Only, first,

Your letters to me—was't not well contrived ?

A hiding place in Psyche's robe—there lie

Next to her skin your letters ; which comes foremost ?

Good—this that swam down like a first moonbeam

Into my world.

Those ? Books I told you of.

Let your first word to me rejoice them, too,—

This minion of Coluthus, writ in red

Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—

Read this line—no, shame—Homer's be the Greek !

My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type

With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page ;

“ He said, and on Antinous directed

—Ah, do not mind that—better that will look
When cast in bronze—an Almaign Kaiser that,
Swart-green and gold with truncheon based on hip—
This rather, turn to—but a check already—
Or you had recognized that here you sit
As I imagined you, Hippolyta
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse!
—Forgot you this then? “carve in bold relief,”—
So you command me—“carve against I come
A Greck, bay filleted and thunder free,
Rising beneath the lifted myrtle-branch,
Whose turn arrives to praise Harmodius.”—Praise him!
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms
Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branches' end
They strain towards, serves for frame to a sole face—
(Place your own face)—the Praiser's, who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,
(Gaze—I am your Harmodius dead and gone,)
Sings, minding not the palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor who cast off
Their violet crowns for him to trample on—
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn—
But you must say a “well” to that—say “well”
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's stuff, marble—marbly
Even to the silence—and before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see throughout all nature varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art:
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty—to the human Archetype—
And every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that—the tree, the flower—why, take the fruit,
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,
Curved beewise o'er its bough, as rosy limbs

Depending nestled in the leaves---and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprung!
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world: but marble!--'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly---as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from deep
In the Earth's heart where itself breeds itself
And whence all baser substance may be worked;
Refine it off to air you may---condense it
Down to the diamond;---is not metal there
When o'er the sudden specks my chisel trips?
---Not flesh---as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare these bluish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where surprised
By the swift implements sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?---

The girl, thus addressed, feels the wings budding within her, that shall upbear her from the birth-place of pollution in whose mud her young feet have been imprisoned. Still, her first words reveal to the proud, passionate, confiding genius the horrible deception that has been practised on him. After his first anguish, one of Pippa's songs steals in to awaken consoling thoughts. He feels that only because his heart was capable of noble trust could it be so deceived; feels too that the beauty which had enchanted him could not be a mere mask, but yet might be vivified by a soul worthy of it, and finds the way to soar above his own pride and the opinions of an often purblind world.

Another song, with which Pippa passes, contains, in its first

A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When Earth was nigher Heaven than now :
And the King's locks curled
Disparting o'er a forehead full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
Of some sacrificial bull.
Only calm as a babe new-born ;
For he has got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude.
Age with its bane so sure gone by,
(The gods so loved him while he dreamed)
That, having lived thus long there seemed
No need the King should ever die.

Luigi—No need that sort of King should ever die.

Among the rocks his city was ;
Before his palace, in the sun,
He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one,
From its threshold of smooth stone.

This picture is as good as the Greeks.

Next came a set of Dramatic Lyrics, all more or less good,
from which we select

ITALY.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive ; I call
That piece a wonder, now ; Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her ? I said
" Frà Pandolf " by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of that earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek ; perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say " Her mantle laps
" Over my Lady's wrist too much," or " Paint
" Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat ;" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed ; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went every where.
Sir, 'twas all one ! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the forward speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good ; but thanked
Some how—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine hundred years' old name
With any body's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling ? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—could make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, " Just this
" Or that in you disgusts me ; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse
Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her ; but who passed without
Much the same smile ? This grew ; I gave commands ;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise ? We'll meet
The company below then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence

* At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

CRISTINA.

To this volume succeeded "King Victor and King Charles," "The Return of the Druses," "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," and "Colombe's Birthday."

The first we do not so much admire, but the other three have all the same originality of conception, delicate penetration into the mysteries of human feeling, atmospheric individuality,* and skill in picturesque detail. All four exhibit very high and pure ideas of Woman, and a knowledge very rare in man of the ways in which what is peculiar in her office and nature works. Her loftiest elevation does not, in his eyes, lift her out of nature. She becomes not a mere saint, but the goddess-queen of nature. Her purity is not cold like marble, but the healthy, gentle energy of the flower, instinctively rejecting what is not fit for it, with no need of disdain to dig a gulf between it and the lower forms of creation. Her office to man is that of the Muse, inspiring him to all good thoughts and deeds! The passions that sometimes agitate these maidens of his verse, are the surprises of noble hearts, unprepared for evil, and even their mistakes cannot cost bitter tears to their attendant angels.

The girl in the "Return of the Druses" is the sort of nature Byron tried to paint in Myrrha. But Byron could only paint women as they were to him. Browning can show what they are in themselves.

In "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" we see a lily, storm-struck, half broken, but still a lily. In "Colombe's Birthday" a queenly rosebud, which expands into the full glowing rose before our eyes. This is marvelous in this drama, how the characters are unfolded before us by the crisis, which not only exhibits, but calls

to life, the higher passions and thoughts which were latent within them.

We bless the poet for these pictures of women, which, however the common tone of society, by the grossness and levity of the remarks bandied from tongue to tongue, would seem to say the contrary, declare there is still in the breasts of men a capacity for pure and exalting passion,—for immortal tenderness.

But we must hasten to conclude with some extracts from another number of "Dramatic Lyrics" lately received. These seem to show that Browning is attaining a more masterly clearness in expression, without seeking to popularize, or omitting to heed the faintest whisper of his genius. He gains without losing as he advances—a rare happiness.

In the former number was a poem called "The Cloister," and in this are two, "The Confessional" and the "Tomb at St. Praxed's," which are the keenest yet a wisely true satire on the forms that hypocrisy puts on in the Romish church. This hateful weed grows rank in all cultivated gardens, but it seems to hide itself, with great care and adroitness, beneath the unnumbered forms and purple gauds of that elaborate system. Accordingly, the hypocrites do not seem so bad, individually, as in other churches, and the satire is continually softening into humour in the "Tomb of St. Praxed's," with its terrible naturalness as to a life-long deception. Tennyson has described the higher kind with a force that will not be surpassed in his Simeon Stylites, but in this piece of Browning's, we find the Flemish school of the same vice.

The "Flight of the Duchess," in its entrancing revelations of the human heart, is a boon to think of. We were, however, obliged to forbear further extracts, with the exception of two from the "Garden Fancies." We regret that these poems, with several others which have been circulated in "The Tribune," could

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES: By ROBERT BROWNING. No. VIII and last. Luria and a Soul's Tragedy. London: Moxon, Dover-st. 1846.

In closing this series of dramatic and lyrical sketches, Browning explains his plan and title thus :

"Here ends my first series of 'Bells and Pomegranates,' and I take the opportunity of explaining, in reply to inquiries, that I only meant by that title to indicate an endeavour toward something like an alternation or mixture of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought, which looks too ambitious, thus expressed, so the symbol was preferred. It is little to the purpose that such is actually one of the most familiar of the Rabbinical (and Patristic) acceptations of the phrase; because I confess that letting authority alone, I supposed the bare words in such juxtaposition would sufficiently convey the desired meaning. 'Faith and good works' is another fancy for instance, and perhaps no easier to arrive at; yet Giotto placed a pomegranate fruit in the hand of Dante, and Raffaello crowned his Theology with blossoms of the same."

That the poet should have supposed the symbol would be understood at once, marks the nature of his mind, a mind which soars in the creative element, and can only be understood by those who are in a state of congenial activity.

The two pieces before us display, or rather betray, a deep and growing acquaintance with the mysteries of the breast. If one tithe of what informs this little pamphlet were brought out into clear relief by the plastic power of a Shakspeare, the world would stand transfixed before the sad revelation.

In the first piece, Luria, a Moor, is put in command of the Florentine army against Pisa; but spies are set around him, and the base mistress sits in trial on the hero she has won by smiles to fight her battles. His great, simple, fiery nature is captivated by the grace, deep sagacity and self-possession of the Florentines. He glows with delight at feeling in himself the birth of a more intellectual life beneath their influence. But when he finds the treachery hid beneath all this beautiful and noble

brave what is so opposite to his own soul. He is, indeed, too noble to resent or revenge, or look on the case other than as God may.

Luria.—In my own East—if you would stoop to help
My barbarous illustration—it sounds ill,
Yet there's no wrong at bottom—rather praise.

Dom.—Well!

Luria.— We have creatures there which if you saw
The first time, you would doubtless marvel at,
For their surpassing beauty, craft and strength,
And tho' it were a lively moment's shock
Wherein you found the purpose of their tongues—
That seemed innocuous in their lambent play,
Yet, once made known, such grace required a guard,
Your reason soon would acquiesce, I think,
In th' Wisdom which made all things for the best,
So take them, good with ill, contentedly—
The prominent beauty with the secret sting.
I am glad to have seen you, wondrous Florentines.

And having seen them, and staked his heart entirely on the venture, he went through with them—and *lost*. He cannot survive the shock of their treachery. He arranges all things nobly in their behalf, and dies, for he was of that mould, the “precious porcelain of human clay” which

“Breaks with the first fall,”

but not without first exercising a redeeming power upon all the foes and traitors round him. His chivalric antagonist, Tiburzio, needed no conversion, for he is one of the noble race who

“joy to feel

A foeman worthy of their steel,”

and are the best friends of such a foeman. But the shrewd, worldly spy, the supplanted rival, the woman who was guilty of that lowest baseness of wishing to make of a lover the tool of her

ture under the crucifixion they have prepared for him ; especially the feelings of the rival, who learns from his remorse to understand genius and magnanimity, are admirably depicted. Such repentance always comes too late for the one injured ; men kill him first, then grow wiser and mourn ; this dreadful and frequent tragedy is shown in Luria's case with its full weight of dark significance, spanned by the rainbow beauty that springs from the perception of truth and nobleness in the victim.

The second piece, "A Soul's Tragedy," is another of the deepest tragedies—a man fancying himself good because he was harsh, honourable because he was not sweet, truer than the lovely and loving natures, because unskilled to use their winning ways. His self-deception is revealed to him by means the most original and admirably managed. Both these dramas are full of genius ; both make the heart ache terribly. A text might well suit the cover—a text we must all of us learn ever more and more deeply to comprehend : "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We hope these eight numbers of "Bells and Pomegranates" will now be reprinted here. They would make one volume of proper size to take into the woods and fields.

LIVES OF THE GREAT COMPOSERS;

HAYDN, MOZART, HANDEL, BACH, BEETHOVEN.

THE lives of the musicians are imperfectly written for this obvious reason. The soul of the great musician can only be expressed in music. This language is so much more ready, flexible, full, and rapid than any other, that we can never expect the minds of those accustomed to its use to be expressed by act or word, with even that degree of adequacy, which we find in those of other men. They are accustomed to a higher stimulus, a more fluent existence. We must read them in their works; this, true of artists in every department, is especially so of the high-priests of sound.

Yet the eye, which has followed with rapture the flight of the bird till it is quite vanished in the blue serene, reverts with pleasure to the nest, which it finds of materials and architecture, that, if wisely examined, correspond entirely with all previously imagined of the songster's history and habits. The biography of the artist is a scanty gloss upon the grand text of his works, but we examine it with a deliberate tenderness, and could not spare those half-effaced pencil marks of daily life.

In vain the healthy reactions of nature have so boldly in our own day challenged the love of greatness, and bid us turn from Boswellism to read the record of the village clerk. These obscure men, you say, have hearts also, busy lives, expanding souls. Study the simple annals of the poor, and you find there,

only restricted and stifled by accident, Milton, Calderon, or Michel Angelo. Precisely for that, precisely because we might be such as these, if temperament and position had seconded the soul's behest, must we seek with eagerness this spectacle of the occasional manifestation of that degree of development which we call hero, poet, artist, martyr. A sense of the depths of love and pity in "our obscure and private breasts" bids us demand to see their sources burst up somewhere through the lava of circumstance, and Peter Bell has no sooner felt his first throb of penitence and piety, than he prepares to read the lives of the saints.

Of all those forms of life which in their greater achievement shadow forth what the accomplishment of our life in the ages must be, the artist's life is the fairest in this, that it weaves its web most soft and full, because of the material most at command. Like the hero, the statesman, the martyr, the artist differs from other men only in this, that the voice of the demon within the breast speaks louder, or is more early and steadily obeyed than by men in general. But colors, and marble, and paper scores are more easily found to use, and more under command, than the occasions of life or the wills of other men, so that we see in the poet's work, if not a higher sentiment, or a deeper meaning, a more frequent and more perfect fulfilment than in him who builds his temple from the world day by day, or makes a nation his canvass and his palette.

It is also easier to us to get the scope of the artist's design and its growth as the area where we see it does not stretch vision beyond its power. The Sybil of Michel Angelo indeed shares the growth of centuries, as much as Luther's Reformation, but the first apparition of the one strikes both the senses and the soul, the other only the latter, so we look most easily and with liveliest impression at the Sybil.

Add the benefits of rehearsal and repetition. The grand Napoleon drama could be acted but once, but Mozart's Don Gio-

vanni presents to us the same thought seven times a week, if we wish to yield to it so many.

The artists too are the young children of our sickly manhood, or wearied out old age. On us life has pressed till the form is marred and bowed down, but their youth is immortal, invincible, to us the inexhaustible prophecy of a second birth. From the naive lisplings of their uncalculating lives are heard anew the tones of that mystic song we call Perfectibility, Perfection.

Artist biographies, scanty as they are, are always beautiful. The tedious cavil of the Teuton cannot degrade, nor the surley superlatives of the Italian wither them. If any fidelity be preserved in the record, it always casts new light on their works. The exuberance of Italian praise is the better extreme of the two, for the heart, with all its blunders, tells truth more easily than the head. The records before us of the great composers are by the patient and reverent Germans, the sensible, never to be duped Englishman, or the sprightly Frenchman ; but a Vasari was needed also to cast a broader sunlight on the scene. All artist lives are interesting. And those of the musicians, peculiarly so to-day, when Music is *the* living, growing art. Sculpture, Painting, Architecture are indeed not dead, but the life they exhibit is as the putting forth of young scions from an old root. The manifestation is hopeful rather than commanding. But music, after all the wonderful exploits of the last century, grows and towers yet. Beethoven towering far above our heads, still with colossal gesture points above. Music is pausing now to explain, arrange, or explore the treasures so rapidly accumulated ; but how great the genius thus employed, how vast the promise for the next revelation ! Beethoven seems to have chronicled all the sobs, the heart-heavings, and god-like Promethean thefts of the Earth-spirit. Mozart has called to the sister stars, as Handel and Haydn have told to other spheres what has been actually performed

The thought of the law that supersedes all thoughts, which pierces us the moment we have gone far in any department of knowledge or creative genius, seizes and lifts us from the ground in music. "Were but this known all would be accomplished," is sung to us ever in the triumphs of harmony. What the other arts indicate and philosophy infers, this all-enfolding language declares, nay publishes, and we lose all care for to-morrow or modern life in the truth averred of old, that all truth is comprised in music and mathematics.

By one pervading spirit
Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
As sages taught where *faith* was found to merit
Initiation in that mystery old.

WORDSWORTH. "*Stanzas on the power of sound.*"

A very slight knowledge of music makes it the best means of interpretation. We meet our friend in a melody as in a glance of the eye, far beyond where words have strength to climb; we explain by the corresponding tone in an instrument that trait in our admired picture, for which no sufficiently subtle analogy had yet been found. Botany had never touched our true knowledge of our favourite flower, but a symphony displays the same attitude and hues; the philosophic historian had failed to explain the motive of our favourite hero, but every bugle calls and every trumpet proclaims him. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!

Of course we claim for music only a greater rapidity, fullness, and, above all, delicacy of utterance. All is in each and each in all, so that the most barbarous stammering of the Hot-tentot indicates the secret of man, as clearly as the rudest zoophyte the perfection of organized being, or the first stop on the reed the harmonies of heaven. But music, by the ready medium, the stimulus and the upbearing elasticity it offers for the inspirations of thought, alone seems to present a living form rather than a dead monument to the desires of Genius.

The feeling naturally given by an expression so facile of the identity and universality of all thought, every thought, is beautifully expressed in this anecdote of Haydn.

When about to compose a symphony he was in the habit of animating his genius by imagining some little romance. An interesting account of one of these is given in Bombet's life of Haydn, p. 75.

“ But when his object was not to express any particular affection, or to paint any particular images, all subjects were alike to him. ‘*The whole art consists,*’ said he, ‘*in taking up a subject and pursuing it.*’ Often when a friend entered as he was about to compose a piece, he would say with a smile, ‘ Give me a subject,’—‘ Give a subject to Haydn ! who would have the courage to do so ?’ ‘ Come, never mind,’ he would say, ‘ give me anything you can think of,’ and you were obliged to obey.”

“ Many of his astonishing quartettes exhibit marks of this (piece of dexterity, the French Chevalier is pleased to call it.) They commence with the most insignificant idea, but, by degrees, this idea assumes a character ; it strengthens, increases, extends itself, and the dwarf becomes a giant before our wondering eyes.”

This is one of the high delights received from a musical composition more than from any other work of art, except perhaps the purest effusions of lyric poetry, that you feel at once both the result and the process. The musician enjoys the great advantage of being able to excite himself to compose by his instrument. This gives him a great advantage above those who are obliged to execute their designs by implements less responsive and exciting. Bach did not consider his pupils as at all advanced, till they could compose from the pure mental harmony, without the outward excitement of the instrument ; but, though in the hours of inspiration the work grows of itself, yet the instrument must be of the greatest use to multiply and prolong these hours. We find that all these great composers were continually at the piano. Haydn seated himself there the first thing in the morning, and Beethoven, when so completely deaf, that he could neither tune

his violin and piano, nor hear the horrible discords he made upon them, stimulated himself continually by the manual utterance to evolution of the divine harmonies which were lost forever to his bodily ear.

It is mentioned by Bombet, as another advantage which the musician possesses over other artists, that—

“His productions are finished as soon as imagined. Thus Haydn, who abounded in such beautiful ideas, incessantly enjoyed the pleasure of creation. The poet shares this advantage with the composer; but the musician can work faster. A beautiful ode, a beautiful symphony, need only be imagined, to cause, in the mind of the author, that secret admiration, which is the life and soul of artists. But in the studies of the military man, of the architect, the sculptor, the painter, there is not invention enough for them to be fully satisfied with themselves; further labors are necessary. The best planned enterprise may fail in the execution; the best conceived picture may be ill painted; all this leaves in the mind of the inventor an obscurity, a feeling of uncertainty, which renders the pleasure of creation less complete. Haydn, on the contrary, in imagining a symphony, was perfectly happy; there only remained the physical pleasure of hearing it performed, and the moral pleasure of seeing it applauded.”

Plausible as this comparison appears at first; the moment you look at an artist like Michel Angelo, who, by deep studies and intensity of survey, had attained such vigor of conception and surety of hand, that forms sprang forth under his touch as fresh, as original, and as powerful, as on the first days when there was light upon the earth, so that he could not turn his pencil this way or that, but these forms came upon the paper as easily as plants from the soil where the fit seed falls,—at Raphael, who seemed to develop at once in his mind the germ of all possible images, so that shapes flowed from his hand plenteous and facile as drops of water from the open sluice, we see that the presence of the highest genius makes all mediums alike transparent, and that the advantages of one over the other respect only the more or less

rapid growth of the artist, and the more or less lively effect on the mind of the beholder. All high art says but one thing ; but this is said with more or less pleasure by the artist, felt with more or less pleasure by the beholder, according to the flexibility and fulness of the language.

As Bombet's lives of Haydn and Mozart are accessible here through an American edition, I shall not speak of these masters with as much particularity as of the three other artists. Bombet's book, though superficial, and in its attempts at criticism totally wanting in that precision which can only be given by a philosophical view of the subject, is lively, informed by a true love for beauty, and free from exaggeration as to the traits of life which we most care for. The life of Haydn is the better of the two, for the calm and equable character of this great man made not much demand on insight. It displays throughout the natural decorum and freedom from servile and conventional restraints, the mingling of dignity and tenderness, the singleness of aim, and childlike simplicity in action proper to the artist life. It flowed a gentle, bounteous river, broadening ever beneath the smiles of a "calm pouring sun." A manly uniformity makes his life intelligible alike to the genius and the citizen. Set the picture in its proper frame, and we think of him with great pleasure, sitting down nicely dressed, with the diamond on his finger given him by the King of Prussia, to compose the Creation, or the Seven Words. His life was never little, never vehement, and an early calm hallowed the gush of his thoughts. We have no regret, no cavil, little thought for this life of Haydn. It is simply the fitting vestibule to the temple of his works.

The healthy energy of his nature is well characterized by what is said of his "obstinate joy."

"The magic of his style seems to me to consist in a predominating character of liberty and joy. This joy of Haydn is a perfectly natural, pure, and continual exaltation ; it reigns in the *allegros*, it is perceptible

“In these compositions, where it is evident from the rhythm, the tone, and the general character, that the author intends to inspire melancholy, this obstinate joy, being unable to show itself openly, is transformed into energy and strength. Observe, this sombre gravity is not pain; it is joy constrained to disguise itself which might be called the concentrated joy of a savage; but never sadness, dejection, or melancholy. Haydn has never been really melancholy more than two or three times; in a verse of his *Stabat Mater*, and in two of the adagios of the *Seven Words*.

“This is the reason why he has never excelled in dramatic music. Without melancholy, there can be no impassioned music.”

All the traits of Haydn's course, his voluntary servitude to Porpora, his gratitude shown at so dear a rate to his Mæcenas, the wig-maker, his easy accommodation to the whims of the Esterhazies, and his wise views of the advantage derived to his talent from being forced to compose nightly a fresh piece for the baryton of Prince Nicholas, the economy of his time, and content with limited means, each and all show the man moderate because so rich, modest because so clear-sighted, robust, ample, nobly earnest, rather than fiery and aspiring. It is a great character, one that does not rouse us to ardent admiration, but always commands, never disappoints. Bombet compares him in his works to Ariosto, and the whole structure of his character reminds us of the “Ariosto of the North,” Walter Scott. Both are examples of that steady and harmonious action of the faculties all through life, so generally supposed inconsistent with gifts like theirs; both exhibit a soil fertile from the bounties of its native forests, and unaided by volcanic action.

The following passage is (to say nothing of its humor) very significant on the topic so often in controversy, as to whether the descriptive powers of music are of the objective or subjective character.

Of an opera, composed by Haydn to Curtz's order, at the age

“ Haydn often says, that he had more trouble in finding out a mode of representing the waves in a tempest in this opera, than he afterwards had in writing fugues with a double subject. Curtz, who had spirit and taste, was difficult to please ; but there was also another obstacle. Neither of the two authors had ever seen either sea or storm. How can a man describe what he knows nothing about? If this happy art could be discovered, many of our great politicians would talk better about virtue. Curtz, all agitation, paced up and down the room, where the composer was seated at the piano forte. ‘ Imagine,’ said he, ‘ a mountain rising, and then a valley sinking ; and then another mountain, and then another valley ; the mountains and the valleys follow one after another, with rapidity, and at every moment, alps and abysses succeed each other.’

“ This fine description was of no avail. In vain did harlequin add the thunder and lightning. ‘ Come describe for me all these horrors,’ he repeated incessantly, ‘ but particularly represent distinctly these mountains and valleys.’

“ Haydn drew his fingers rapidly over the key board, ran through the semitones, tried abundance of *sevenths*, passed from the lowest notes of the bass to the highest of the treble. Curtz was still dissatisfied. At last, the young man, out of all patience, extended his hands to the two ends of the harpsichord, and, bringing them rapidly together, exclaimed ‘ The devil take the tempest.’ ‘ That ’s it, that ’s it,’ cried the harlequin, springing upon his neck and nearly stifling him. Haydn added, that when he crossed the Straits of Dover, in bad weather, many years afterwards, he laughed during the whole of the passage in thinking of the storm in *The Devil on two Sticks*.

“ ‘ But how,’ said I to him, ‘ is it possible, by sounds, to describe a tempest, and that *distinctly* too? As this great man is indulgence itself, I added, that, by imitating the peculiar tones of a man in terror or despair, *an author of genius may communicate to an auditor the sensations which the sight of a storm would cause ;* but,’ said I, ‘ music can no more represent a tempest, than say ‘ Mr. Hadyn lives near the barrier of Schonbrunn.’ ‘ You may be right,’ replied he, ‘ but recollect, nevertheless, that words and especially scenery guide the imagination of the spectator.’ ”

Let it be an encouragement to the timidity of youthful genius to see that an eaglet like Haydn has ever groped and flown so

In later days, though he had the usual incapacity of spontaneous genius, as to giving a reason for the faith that was in him, he had also its perfect self-reliance. He, too, would have said, when told that the free expression of a thought was contrary to rule, that he would make it a rule then, and had no reason to give why he put a phrase or note here, and thus, except "It was best so. It had the best effect so." The following anecdote exhibits in a spirited manner the contrast between the free genius and the pedant critic.

"Before Haydn had lost his interest in conversation, he related with pleasure many anecdotes respecting his residence in London. A nobleman passionately fond of music, according to his own account, came to him one morning, and asked him to give him some lessons in counterpoint, at a guinea a lesson. Haydn, seeing that he had some knowledge of music, accepted his proposal. 'When shall we begin?' 'Immediately, if you please,' replied the nobleman; and he took out of his pocket a quartett of Haydn's. 'For the first lesson,' continued he, 'let us examine this quartett, and tell me the reason of certain modulations, and of the general management of the composition, which I cannot altogether approve, since it is contrary to the rules.'

"Haydn, a little surprised, said, that he was ready to answer his questions. The nobleman began, and, from the very first bar, found something to remark upon every note. Haydn, with whom invention was a habit, and who was the opposite of a pedant, found himself a good deal embarrassed, and replied continually, 'I did so because it has a good effect; I have placed this passage here, because I think it suitable.' The Englishman, in whose opinion these replies were nothing to the purpose, still returned to his proofs, and demonstrated very clearly, that his quartett was good for nothing. 'But, my Lord, arrange this quartett in your own way; hear it played, and you will then see which of the two is best.' 'How can yours, which is contrary to the rules be the best?' 'Because it is the most agreeable.' My Lord still returned to the subject. Haydn replied as well as he was able; but, at last, out of patience, 'I see, my Lord,' said he, 'that it is you who are so good as to give lessons to me, and I am obliged to confess, that I do not merit the honour of having such a

understand how an author, who adheres to them, should fail of producing a *Matrimonio Segreto*."

I must in this connexion, introduce a passage from the life of Handel. "The highest effort of genius here (in music) consists in direct violations of rule. The very first answer of the fugue in the overture to Mucius Scævola affords an instance of this kind. Geminiani, the strictest observer of rule, was so charmed with this direct transgression of it, that, on hearing its effect, he cried out, *Quel semitono* (meaning the f sharp) *vale un mondo*. That semitone is worth a world."

I should exceedingly like to quote the passage on Haydn's quartetts, and the comparison between the effect produced by one of his and one of Beethoven's. But room always fails us in this little magazine. I cannot, however, omit a passage, which gave me singular pleasure, referring to Haydn's opinion of the importance of the air. For the air is the *thought* of the piece, and ought never to be disparaged from a sense of the full flow of concord.

"Who would think it? This great man, under whose authority our miserable pedants of musicians, without genius, would fain shelter themselves, repeated incessantly; 'Let your *air* be good, and your composition, whatever it be, will be so likewise, and will assuredly please.'

"'It is the soul of music,' continued he; 'it is the life, the spirit, the essence of a composition. Without this, Tartini may find out the most singular and learned chords, but nothing is heard but a labored sound; which, though it may not offend the ear, leaves the head empty and the heart cold.'"

The following passage illustrates happily the principle.

"Art is called *Art*, because it is not Nature."

"In music the best physical imitation is, perhaps, that which only just indicates its object; which shows it to us through a veil, and abstains from scrupulously representing nature exactly as she is. This kind of imitation is the perfection of the descriptive department. You are aware, my friend, that all the arts are founded to a certain degree on what is not

true; an obscure doctrine, notwithstanding its apparent clearness, but from which the most important principles are derived. It is thus that from a dark grotto springs the river, which is to water vast provinces. You have more pleasure in seeing a beautiful picture of the garden of the Tuilleries, than in beholding the same garden, faithfully reflected from one of the mirrors of the chateau; yet the scene displayed in the mirror has far more variety of colouring than the painting, were it the work of Claude Lorraine; the figures have motion; everything is more true to nature; still you cannot help preferring the picture. A skilful artist never departs from that degree of falsity which is allowed in the art he professes. He is well aware, that it is not by imitating nature to such a degree as to produce deception, that the arts give pleasure; he makes a distinction between those accurate daubs, called eye-traps, and the St. Cecilia of Raphael. Imitation should produce the effect which the object imitated would have upon us, did it strike us in those fortunate moments of sensibility and enjoyment, which awaken the passions."

The fault of this passage consists in the inaccurate use of the words *true* and *false*. Bombet feels distinctly that truth to the ideal is and must be above truth to the actual; it is only because he feels this, that he enjoys the music of Haydn at all; and yet from habits of conformity and complaisance he well nigh mars his thought by use of the phraseology of unthinking men, who apprehend no truth beyond that of facts apparent to the senses.

Let us pass to the life of Handel. We can but glance at these great souls, each rich enough in radiating power to be the centre of a world; and can only hope to indicate, not declare, their different orbits and relations. Haydn and Mozart both looked to Handel with a religious veneration. Haydn was only unfolded to his greatest efforts after hearing, in his latest years, Handel's great compositions in England.

"One day at Prince Schwartzenberg's, when Handel's Messiah was performed, upon expressing my admiration of one of the sublime choruses of that work, Haydn said to me thoughtfully, *This man is the father of us all*.

"I am convinced, that, if he had not studied Handel, he would never

have written the *Creation*; his genius was fired by that of this master. It was remarked by every one here, that, after his return from London, there was more grandeur in his ideas; in short, he approached, as far as is permitted to human genius, the unattainable object of his songs. Handel is simple; his accompaniments are written in three parts only; but, to use a Neapolitan phrase of Gluck's, *There is not a note that does not draw blood.*"—Bombet, p. 180.

"Mozart most esteemed Porpora, Durante, Leo, and Alessandro Scarlatti, but he placed Handel above them all. He knew the principal works of that great master by heart. He was accustomed to say, Handel knows best of all of us what is capable of producing a great effect. When he chooses, he strikes like the thunderbolt."—Ibid. p. 291.

Both these expressions, that of Gluck and that of Mozart, happily characterize Handel in the vigor and grasp of his genius, as Haydn, in the amplitude and sunny majesty of his career, is well compared to the gazing, soaring eagle.

I must insert other beautiful tributes to the genius of Handel.

After the quarrel between Handel and many of the English nobles, which led to their setting up an opera in opposition to his, they sent to engage Hasse and Porpora, as their composers. When Hasse was invited over, the first question he asked was, whether Handel was dead. Being answered in the negative, he long refused to come, thinking it impossible that a nation, which might claim the benefit of Handel's genius, could ask aid from any other.

When Handel was in Italy, Scarlatti saw him first at the carnival, playing on the harpsichord, in his mask. Scarlatti immediately affirmed it could be none but the famous Saxon or the devil.

Scarlatti, pursuing the acquaintance, tried Handel's powers in every way.

"When they came to the organ, not a doubt remained as to which the preference belonged. Scarlatti himself declared the superiority of his antagonist, and owned that until he had heard him upon this instrument,

had no conception of his powers. So greatly was he struck with his peculiar way of playing, that he followed him all over Italy, and was never so happy as when he was with him. And ever afterwards, Scarlatti, as often as he was admired for his own great execution, would mention Handel, and cross himself in token of veneration."—*Life of Handel*.

These noble rivalries, this tender enthusiastic conviction of the superiority of another, this religious

—“joy to feel

A foeman worthy of our steel,”

one instance of which delights us more than all the lonely achievements of intellect, as showing the twofold aspect of the soul, and linking every nature, generous enough for sympathy, in the golden chain, which upholds the earth and the heavens, are found everywhere in the history of high genius. Only the little men of mere talent deserve a place at Le Sage's supper of the authors. Genius cannot be forever on the wing; it craves a home, a holy land; it carries reliquaries in the bosom; it craves cordial draughts from the goblets of other pilgrims. It is always pious, always chivalric; the artist, like the Preux, throws down his shield to embrace the antagonist, who has been able to pierce it; and the greater the genius, the more do we glow with delight at his power of feeling,—need of feeling reverence not only for the creative soul, but for its manifestation through fellow men. What melody of Beethoven's is more melodious, than his letter of regal devotion to Cherubini, or the transports with which he calls out on first hearing the compositions of Schubert; “Wahrlich in dem Schubert wohnt ein göttlicher Funke.” Truly in Schubert dwells a divine fire.*

But to return to Handel. The only biography of him I have

* As Schubert's music begins to be known among ourselves, it may be interesting to record the names of those songs, which so affected Beethoven. They are Ossian's Gesänge, Die Burgschaft, Die junge Nonne, and Die Grenze der Menschheit.

seen is a little volume from the library of the University at Cambridge, as brief, and, in the opinion of the friend who brought it to me, as dry and scanty as possible. I did not find it so. It is written with the greatest simplicity, in the style of the days of Addison and Steele ; and its limited technology contrasts strongly with the brilliancy of statement and infinite "*nuances*" of the present style of writing on such subjects. But the writer is free from exaggeration, without being timid or cold ; and he brings to his work the requisites of a true feeling of the genius of Handel, and sympathy with his personal character. This lies, indeed, so deep, that it never occurs to him to give it distinct expression ; it is only implied in his selection, as judicious as simple, of anecdotes to illustrate it.

For myself, I like a dry book, such as is written by men who give themselves somewhat tamely to the task in hand. I like to read a book written by one who had no higher object than mere curiosity, or affectionate sympathy, and never draws an inference. Then I am sure of the facts more nakedly true, than when the writer has any theory of his own, and have the excitement all the way of putting them into new relations. The present is the gentle, faithful narrative of a private friend. He does not give his name, nor pretend to anything more than a slight essay towards giving an account of so great a phenomenon as Handel.

The vigour, the ready decision, and independence of Handel's character are displayed in almost every trait of his youthful years. At seven years old he appears as if really inspired by a guardian genius. His father was going to Weissenfels, to visit an elder son, established at court there. He refused to take the little Handel, thinking it would be too much trouble. The boy, finding tears and entreaties of no avail, stole out and followed the carriage on foot. When his father perceived him persist in this, he could resist no longer, but took him into the carriage and carried him to Weissenfels. There the Duke, hearing him play

by accident in the chapel, and finding it was but a little child, who had been obliged too to cultivate his talent by stealth, in opposition to the wishes of his father, interfered, and removed all obstruction from the course of his destiny.

Like all the great musicians he was precocious. This necessarily results from the more than usually delicate organization they must possess, though, fortunately for the art, none but Mozart has burnt so early with that resplendence that prematurely exhausted his lamp of life. At nine years of age Handel composed in rule, and played admirably on more than one instrument. At fifteen he insisted on playing the first harpsichord at the Hamburg opera house, and again his guardian genius interfered in a manner equally picturesque and peculiar.

“The elder candidate was not unfit for the office, and insisted on the right of succession. Handel seemed to have no plea, but that of natural superiority, of which he was conscious, and from which he would not recede.”

Parties ran high; the one side unwilling that a boy should arrogate a place above a much older man, one who had a prior right to the place, the other maintaining that the opera-house could not afford to lose so great a composer as Handel gave promise of becoming, for a punctilio of this kind. Handel at last obtained the place.

“Determined to make Handel pay dear for his priority, his rival stifled his rage for the present, only to wait an opportunity of giving it full vent. One day, as they were coming out of the orchestra, he made a push at Handel with a sword, which being aimed full at his heart, would forever have removed him from the office he had usurped, but for the friendly score which he accidentally carried in his bosom, and through which to have forced the weapon would have demanded the might of Ajax himself. Had this happened in the early ages, not a mortal but would have been persuaded that Apollo himself had interfered to preserve him, in the

The same guardian demon presided always over his outward fortunes. His life, like that of Haydn, was one of prosperity. The only serious check he ever experienced (at a very late day in England) was only so great as to stimulate his genius to manifest itself by a still higher order of efforts, than before (his oratorios.) And these were not only worthy of his highest aspirations, but successful with the public of his own day.

It is by no means the case in the arts, that genius must not expect sympathy from its contemporaries. Its history shows it in many instances, answering as much as prophesying. And Haydn, Handel, and Mozart seemed to culminate to a star-gazing generation.

While yet in his teens, Handel met the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was very desirous to send him to Italy, at his own expense, that he might study the Italian music in its native land. "But he refused to accept the Duke's offer, though determined to go as soon as he could make up a privy purse for the purpose. And this noble independency he preserved through life," and we may add the twin sister, liberality, for we find scattered through his life numerous instances of a wise and princely beneficence.

When he at last went to Italy, he staid six years, a period of inestimable benefit to his growth. I pause with delight at this rare instance of a mind obtaining the food it craves, just at the time it craves it. The *too early* and *too late*, which prevent so many "trees from growing up into the heavens," withered no hour of Handel's life. True, the compensating principle showed itself in his regard, for he had neither patience nor fortitude, which the usual training might have given. But it seems as if what the man lost, the genius gained, and we cannot be displeased at the exception which proves the rule.

The Italians received him with that affectionate enthusiasm, which they show as much towards foreign as native talent. The

said, now greet our countryman Powers, which not many years since made their halls resound with the cry, "there is no tenor like Braham," was heard in shouts of "Viva il caro Sassone!" at every new composition given by Handel on their stage. The people followed him with rapture; the nobles had musical festivals prepared in his honour; Scarlatti's beautiful homage has been mentioned above; and the celebrated Corelli displayed the same modest and noble deference to his instructions. He too, addressed him as "*Caro Sassone*."

A charming anecdote of Corelli is not irrelevant here.

"A little incident relating to Corelli shows his character so strongly, that I shall be excused for reciting it, though foreign to our present purpose. He was requested one evening to play, to a large and polite company, a fine solo which he had lately composed. Just as he was in the midst of his performance, some of the number began to discourse together a little unseasonably; Corelli gently lays down his instrument. Being asked whether anything was the matter with him; nothing, he replied, he was only afraid that he interrupted the conversation. The elegant propriety of this silent censure, joined with his genteel and good-humoured answer, afforded great pleasure, even to the persons who occasioned it. They begged him to resume his instrument, assuring him at the same time, that he might depend on all the attention which the occasion required, and which his merit ought before to have commanded."—*Life of Handel*.

His six years' residence in Italy educated Handel's genius into a certainty, vigour and command of resources that made his after career one track of light. The forty years of after life are one continued triumph, a showering down of life and joy on an expectant world.

Although Germany offered every encouragement both from people and princes, England suited him best, and became the birthplace of his greatest works. For nine years after he began to conduct the opera-house, his success with the public and hap-

he came for brief space amid the breakers. It is, indeed, rather wonderful that he kept peace so long with those most refractory subjects, the singers, than that it should fail at last. Fail at last it did! Handel was peremptory in his requisitions, the singing-birds obstinate in their disobedience; the public divided, and the majority went against Handel. The following little recital of one of his many difficulties, with his prima-donnas, exhibits his character with amusing fidelity.

“Having one day some words with Cuzzoni on her refusing to sing *Cara Immagine* in *Ottone*, ‘Oh Madame,’ said he, ‘je sais bien que vous êtes une veritable Diable, mais je vous ferai sçavoir, moi, que je suis Beelzebub le *Chef* des diables.’ With this he took her up by the waist, swearing that, if she made any more words, he would fling her out of the window. It is to be noted, (adds the biographer with Counsellor Pleydel-like facetiousness,) that this was formerly one of the methods of executing criminals in Germany, a process not unlike that of the Tarpeian rock, and probably derived from it.”—*Life of Handel*.

Senesino, too, was one of Handel’s malcontent aids, the same of whom the famous anecdote is told, thus given in the *Life of Haydn*.

“Senesino was to perform on a London theatre the character of a tyrant, in I know not what opera; the celebrated Farinelli sustained that of an oppressed prince. Farinelli, who had been giving concerts in the country, arrived only a few hours before the representation, and the unfortunate hero and the cruel tyrant saw one another for the first time on the stage. When Farinelli came to his first air, in which he supplicates for mercy, he sung it with such sweetness and expression, that the poor tyrant, totally forgetting himself, threw himself upon his neck and repeatedly embraced him.”

The refined sensibility and power of free abandonment to the life of the moment, displayed in this anecdote, had made Senesino the darling, the spoiled child of the public, so that they were ungrateful to their great father, Handel. But he could not bow to the breeze. He began life anew at the risk of the wealth he

had already acquired, and these difficulties only urged him to new efforts. The Oratorio dawned upon his stimulated mind, and we may, perhaps, thank the humours of Senesino and Faustina for the existence of the Messiah.

The oratorios were not brought forward without opposition. That part of the public, which in all ages, walks in clogs on the green-sward, and prefers a candle to the sun, which accused Socrates of impiety, denounced the *Tartuffe* of Moliere as irreligious, which furnishes largely the Oxford press in England, and rings its little alarm bell among ourselves at every profound and universal statement of religious experience, was exceedingly distressed, that Handel should profane the details of biblical history by wedding them to his God-given harmonies. Religion, they cried, was lost; she must be degraded, familiarized; she would no longer speak with authority after she had been sung. But, happily, owls hoot in vain in the ear of him whose soul is possessed by the muse, and Handel, like all the great, could not even understand the meaning of these petty cavils. Genius is fearless; she never fancies herself wiser than God, as prudence does. She is faithful, for she has been trusted, and feels the presence of God in herself too clearly to doubt his government of the world.

Handel's great exertions at this period brought on an attack of paralysis, which he cured by a course that shows his untamed, powerful nature, and illustrates in a homely way the saying, Fortune favors the brave.

Like Tasso, and other such fervid and sanguine persons, if he could at last be persuaded to use a remedy for any sickness, he always overdid the matter. As for this palsied arm,—

“It was thought best for him to have recourse to the vapor baths at Aix-la-Chapelle, over which he sat three times as long as hath ever been the practice. Whoever knows anything of the nature of colds, and the

sweats were profuse beyond what can well be imagined. His cure, from the manner as well as the quickness with which it was wrought, passed with the nuns for a miracle. When, but a few hours from the time of his leaving the bath, they heard him at the organ in the principal church, as well as convent, playing in a manner so much beyond what they had ever heard or even imagined, it is not wonderful, that they should suppose the interposition of a higher power."

He remained, however, some weeks longer at the baths to confirm the cure, thus suddenly effected by means that would have destroyed a frame of less strength and energy. The more cruel ill of blindness fell upon his latest years, but he had already run an Olympian course, and could sit still with the palm and oak crowns upon his brows.

Handel is a Greek in the fullness and summer glow of his nature, in his directness of action and unrepentant steadfastness. I think also with a pleasure, in which I can hardly expect sympathy, since even his simple biographer shrinks from it with the air of "a person of quality," on the fact that he was fond of good eating, and also ate a great deal. As he was neither epicure nor gourmand, I not only accept the excuse of the biographer, that a person of his choleric nature, vast industry and energy, needed a great deal of sustenance; but it seems to me perfectly in character for one of his large heroic mould. I am aware that these are total abstinence days, especially in the regions of art and romance; but the Greeks were wiser and more beautiful, if less delicate than we; and I am strongly reminded by all that is said of Handel, of a picture painted in their golden age. The subject was Hercules at the court of Admetus; in the background handmaids are mourning round the corpse of the devoted Alceste, while in the foreground the son of Jove is satisfying what seem to his attendants an interminable hunger. They are heaping baskets, filling cans, toiling up the stairs with huge joints of meat; the hero snaps his fingers, impatient for the new course, though many an empty trencher bears traces of what he has

already devoured. For why ; a journey to Tartarus and conquest of gloomy Dis would hardly, in the natural state of society, be undertaken on a biscuit and a glass of lemonade. And when England was yet fresh from her grand revolution, and John Bull still cordially enjoyed his yule logs and Christmas feasts, "glorious John Dryden" was not ashamed to write thus of the heroes,—

"And when the *rage of hunger* was appeased."

Then a man was not ashamed of being not only a man in mind, but every inch a man. And Handel surely did not neglect to labour after he had feasted. Beautiful are the upward tending, slender stemmed plants ! Not less beautiful and longer lived, those of stronger root, more powerful trunk, more spreading branches ! Let each be true to his law ; concord, not monotony, is music. We thank thee, Nature, for Handel, we thank thee for Mozart ! Yet one story from the Life of Handel ere we pass on. It must interest all who have observed the same phenomenon of a person exquisitely alive to the music of verse, stupified and bewildered by other music.

"Pope often met Handel at the Earl of Burlington's. One day after Handel had played some of the finest things he ever composed, Mr. Pope declared that they gave him no sort of pleasure ; that his ears were of that untoward make, and reprobate cast, as to receive his music, which he was persuaded was the best that could be, with as much indifference as the airs of a common ballad. A person of his excellent understanding, it is hard to suspect of affectation. And yet it is as hard to conceive how an ear, so perfectly attentive to all the delicacies of rhythm and poetical numbers, should be totally insensible to the charm of musical sounds. An attentiveness, too, which was as discernible in his manner of reading, as it is in his method of writing."—*Life of Handel*.

The principal facts of that apparition which bore the name of Mozart, are well known. His precocious development was far more precocious than that of any other artist on record. (And

mathematics, that is, the early prodigies in childish form, which seem to say that neither the art nor the science requires the slow care of the gardener, Experience, but are plants indigenous to the soil, which need only air and light to lure them up to majestic stature.) Connected with this is his exquisite delicacy of organization, unparalleled save in the history of the fairy Fine Ear, so that at six years old he perceived a change of half a quarter of a note in the tuning of a violin, and fainted always at sound of the trumpet. The wonderful exploits which this accurate perception of and memory for sounds enabled him to perform, are known to every one, but I could read the story a hundred times yet, so great is its childish beauty. Again, allied with this are his extreme tenderness and loving nature. In this life (Schlichtegroll's, translated by Bombet) it is mentioned, "He would say ten times a day to those about him, 'Do you love me well?' and whenever in jest they said 'No,' the tears would roll down his cheeks." I remember to have read elsewhere an anecdote of the same engaging character. "One day, when Mozart, (then in his seventh year,) was entering the presence chamber of the empress, he fell and hurt himself. The other young princesses laughed, but Marie Antoinette took him up, and consoled him with many caresses. The little Mozart said to her, "You are good; I will marry you." Well for the lovely princess, if common men could have met and understood her lively and genial nature as genius could, in its childlike need of love.

With this great desire for sympathy in the affections was linked, as by nature it should be, an entire self-reliance in action. Mozart knew nothing but music; on that the whole life of his soul was shed, but there he was as unerring and undoubting, as fertile and aspiring.

"At six years of age, sitting down to play in presence of the emperor

The emperor sent for Wagenseil, and gave up his place to him by the side of the piano. 'Sir,' said Mozart to the composer, 'I am going to play one of your concertos; you must turn over the leaves for me.' The emperor said, in jest, to the little Wolfgang; 'It is not very difficult to play with all one's fingers, but to play with only one, without seeing the keys, would indeed be extraordinary.' Without manifesting the least surprise at this strange proposal, the child immediately began to play with a single finger, and with the greatest possible precision and clearness. He afterwards desired them to cover the keys of the piano, and continued to play in the same manner, as if he had long practiced it.

From his most tender age, Mozart, animated with the true feeling of his art, was never vain of the compliments paid him by the great. He only performed insignificant trifles when he had to do with people unacquainted with music. He played, on the contrary, with all the fire and attention of which he was capable, when in the presence of connoisseurs; and his father was often obliged to have recourse to artifice, in order to make the great men, before whom he was to exhibit, pass for such with him."

Here, in childlike soft unconsciousness, Mozart acts the same part that Beethoven did, with cold imperial sarcasm, when the Allied Sovereigns were presented to him at Vienna. "I held myself 'vornehm,' " said Beethoven, that is, treated them with dignified affability; and his smile is one of saturnine hauteur, as he says it; for the nature, so deeply glowing towards man, was coldly disdainful to those who would be more than men, merely by the aid of money and trappings. Mozart's attitude is the lovelier and more simple; but Beethoven's lion tread and shake of the mane are grand too.

The following anecdote shows, that Mozart (rare praise is this) was not less dignified and clear-sighted as a man than in his early childhood.

"The Italians at the court of the Emperor, Joseph the Second, spoke of Mozart's first essays (when he was appointed chapel-master) with more jealousy than fairness, and the emperor, who scarcely ever judged for himself, was easily carried away by their decisions. One day after hearing the rehearsal of a comic opera, which he had himself demanded of Mozart,

he said to the composer, 'My dear Mozart, that is too fine for my ears; there are too many notes there.' 'I ask your majesty's pardon,' replied Mozart, dryly; 'there are just as many notes as there should be.' The emperor said nothing, and appeared rather embarrassed by the reply; but when the opera was performed, he bestowed on it the greatest encomiums."

This anecdote certainly shows Joseph the Second to be not a mean man, if neither a sage nor a connoisseur.

Read in connexion with the foregoing, the traits recorded of the artist during his wife's illness, (Life of Mozart, p. 309,) and you have a sketch of a most beautiful character.

Combined with this melting sweetness, and extreme delicacy, was a prophetic energy of deep-seated fire in his genius. He inspires while he overwhelms you. The vigour, the tenderness, and far-reaching ken of his conceptions, were seconded by a range, a readiness, and flexibility in his talents for expression, which can only be told by the hackneyed comparison between him and Raphael. A life of such unceasing flow and pathetic earnestness must at any rate have early exhausted the bodily energies. But the high-strung nerves of Mozart made him excessive alike in his fondness for pleasure, and in the melancholy which was its reaction. His life was too eager and keen to last. The gift of presentiment, as much developed in his private history as in his works, offers a most interesting study to the philosophic observer, but one of too wide a scope for any discussion here.

I shall not speak of Mozart as a whole man, for he was not so; but rather the exquisite organ of a divine inspiration. He scarcely took root on the soil; not knowing common purposes, cares, or discretions, his life was all crowded with creative efforts, and vehement pleasures, or tender feelings between. His private character was that of a child, as ever he loved to be stimulated to compose by having fairy tales told to him by the voice of

affection. And when we consider how any art tends to usurp the whole of a man's existence, and music most of all to unfit for other modes of life, both from its stimulus to the senses and exaltation of the soul, we have rather reason to wonder that the other four great ones lived severe and manlike lives, than that this remained a voluptuary and a fair child. The virtues of a child he had,—sincerity, tenderness, generosity, and reverence. In the generosity with which he gave away the precious works of his genius, and the princely sweetness with which he conferred these favours, we are again reminded of Raphael. There are equally fine anecdotes of Haydn's value for him, and his for Haydn. Haydn answered the critics of "Don Giovanni," "I am not a judge of the dispute ; all that I know is, that Mozart is the greatest composer now existing." Mozart answered the critic on Haydn, "Sir, if you and I were both melted down together, we should not furnish materials for one Haydn."

Richard Cœur de Lion and Saladin !

We never hear the music of Mozart to advantage, yet no one can be a stranger to the character of his melodies. The idea charms me of a symbolical correspondence, not only between the soul of man and the productions of nature, but of a like harmony, pervading every invention of his own. It seems he has not only "builded better than he knew," when following out the impulse of his genius, but in every mechanical invention, so that all the furniture of man's life is necessarily but an aftergrowth of nature. It seems clear that not only every hue, every gem, every flower, every tree, has its correspondent species in the race of man, but the same may be said of instruments, as obviously of the telescope, microscope, compass. It is clearly the case with the musical instruments. As a child I at once thought of Mozart as the Flute, and to this day, cannot think of one without the other. Nothing ever occurred to confirm this fancy, till a

year or two since, in the book now before me, I found with delight the following passage.

“The most remarkable circumstance in his music, independently of the genius displayed in it, is the novel way in which he employs the orchestra, especially the wind instruments. He draws surprising effect from *the flute*, an instrument of which Cimarosa hardly ever made any use.”

Ere bidding adieu to Mozart, to whom I have only turned your eyes, as the fowler directs those of the by-standers to the bird glancing through the heavens, which he had not skill to bring down, and consoles himself with thinking the fair bird shows truer, if farther, on the wing, I will insert three sonnets, so far interesting as showing the degree of truth with which these objects appear to one, who has enjoyed few opportunities of hearing the great masters, and is only fitted to receive them by a sincere love of music, which caused a rejection of the counterfeits that have been current among us. They date some years back, and want that distinctness of expression, so attainable to-day; but, if unaided by acquaintance with criticism on these subjects, have therefore the merit of being a pure New England growth, and deserve recording like Sigismund Biederman's comparison of Queen Margaret to his favourite of the Swiss pasture. “The queen is a stately creature. The chief cow of the herd, who carries the bouquets and garlands to the chalet, has not a statelier pace.”—*Anne of Geierstein*.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

The charms of melody, in simple airs,
By human voices sung, are always felt;
With thoughts responsive, careless hearers melt,
Of secret ills, which our frail nature bears.

We listen, weep, forget. But when the throng
Of a great Master's thoughts, above the reach
Of words or colors, wire and wood can teach

By laws which to the spirit-world belong,—
 When several parts, to tell one mood combined,
 Flash meaning on us we can ne'er express,
 Giving to matter subtlest powers of Mind,
 Superior joys attentive souls confess.
 The harmony which suns and stars obey,
 Blesses our earth-bound state with visions of supernal day.

BEETHOVEN.

Most intellectual master of the art,
 Which, best of all, teaches the mind of man
 The universe in all its varied plan,—
 What strangely mingled thoughts thy strains impart!
 Here the faint tenor thrills the inmost heart,
 There the rich bass the Reason's balance shows;
 Here breathes the softest sigh that Love e'er knows;
 There sudden fancies, seeming without chart,
 Float into wildest breezy interludes;
 The past is all forgot,—hopes sweetly breathe,
 And our whole being glows,—when lo! beneath
 The flowery brink, Despair's deep sob concludes!
 Startled, we strive to free us from the chain,—
 Notes of high triumph swell, and we are thine again!

MOZART.

If to the intellect and passions strong
 Beethoven speak, with such resistless power,
 Making us share the full creative hour,
 When his wand fixed wild Fancy's mystic throng,
 Oh nature's finest lyre! to thee belong
 The deepest, softest tones of tenderness,
 Whose purity the listening angels bless,
 With silvery clearness of seraphic song.
 Sad are those chords, oh, heavenward striving soul!
 A love, which never found its home on earth,
 Pensively vibrates, even in thy mirth,
 And gentle laws thy lightest notes control;
 Yet dear that sadness! Spherical concords felt
 Purify most those hearts which most they melt.

We have spoken of the widely varying, commanding, yet, bright and equable life of Haydn; of the victorious procession, and regal Alexandrine aspect of Handel; of the tender, beloved, overflowing, all too intense life of Mozart. They are all great and beautiful; look at them from what side you will, the foot stands firm, the mantle falls in wide and noble folds, and the eye flashes divine truths. But now we come to a figure still more Roman, John Sebastian Bach, all whose names we give to distinguish him from a whole family of geniuses, a race through which musical inspiration had been transmitted, without a break, for six generations; nor did it utterly fail, after coming to its full flower in John Sebastian; his sons, though not equal to their father, were not unworthy their hereditary honours.

The life of Bach which I have before me, (translated from the German of J. N. Forkel, author also of the "Complete History of Music,") is by far the best of any of these records. It is exceedingly brief and simple, very bare of facts, but the wise, quiet enthusiasm of its tone, and the delicate discrimination of the remarks on the genius of Bach, bring us quite home to him and his artist-life. Bach certainly shines too lonely in the sky of his critic, who has lived in and by him, till he cannot see other souls in their due places, but would interrupt all hymns to other deities with "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" But his worship is true to the object, if false to the All, and the pure reverence of his dependence has made him fit to reproduce the genius which has fed his inmost life. All greatness should enfranchise its admirers, first from all other dominions, and then from its own. We cannot but think that Forkel has seen, since writing this book, that he deified Bach too exclusively, but he can never feel the shame of blind or weak obsequiousness. His, if idolatry, was yet in the spirit of true religion.

The following extract from the preface, gives an idea of the spirit in which the whole book is written.

“How do I wish I were able to describe, according to its merit, the sublime genius of this first of all artists, whether German or foreign! After the honour of being so great an artist, so preëminent above all as he was, there is perhaps no greater than that of being able duly to appreciate so entirely perfect an art, and to speak of it with judgment. He who can do the last, must have a mind not wholly uncongenial to that of the artist himself, and has therefore, in some measure, the flattering probability in his favour, that he might perhaps have been capable of the first, if similar external relations had led him into the proper career. But I am not so presumptuous as to believe, that I could ever attain to such an honour. I am, on the contrary, thoroughly convinced, that no language in the world is rich enough to express all that might and should be said of the astonishing extent of such a genius. The more intimately we are acquainted with it, the more does our admiration increase. All our eulogiums, praises, and admiration, will always be, and remain no more than well-meant prattle. Whoever has had an opportunity of comparing together the works of art, of several centuries, will not find this declaration exaggerated; he will rather have adopted the opinion, that Bach's works cannot be spoken of, by him who is fully acquainted with them, except with rapturé, and some of them even with a kind of sacred awe. We may indeed conceive and explain his management of the internal mechanism of the art; but how he contrived at the same time to inspire into this mechanic art, which he alone has attained in such high perfection, the living spirit which so powerfully attaches us even in his smallest works, will probably be always felt and admired only, but never conceived.”

Of the materials for this narrative he says,

“I am indebted to the two eldest sons of J. S. Bach. I was not only personally acquainted with both, but kept up a constant correspondence with them for many years, chiefly with C. Ph. Emanuel. The world knows that they were both great artists; but it perhaps does not know that to the last moment of their lives they never spoke of their father's genius without enthusiasm and admiration. As I had from my early youth felt the same veneration for the genius of their father, it was a frequent theme of discussion with us, both in our conversations and correspondence. This made me by degrees so acquainted with everything relative to J. S. Bach's life, genius, and works, that I may now hope to be able to give to the public not only some detailed, but also useful information on the subject.

“I have no other object whatever than to call the attention of the pub-

lic to an undertaking, the sole aim of which is to raise a worthy monument to German art, to furnish the true artist with a gallery of the most instructive models, and to open to the friends of musical science an inexhaustible source of the sublimest enjoyment."

The deep, tender repose in the contemplation of genius, the fidelity in the details of observation, indicated in this passage, are the chief requisites of the critic. But he should never say of any object, as Forkel does, it is the greatest that ever was or ever will be, for that is limiting the infinite, and making himself a bigot, gentle and patient perhaps, but still a bigot. All are so who limit the divine within the boundaries of their present knowledge.

The founder of the Bach family (in its musical phase) was a Thuringian miller. "In his leisure hours he amused himself with his guitar, which he even took with him into the mill, and played upon it amidst all the noise and clatter." The same love of music, for its own sake, continued in the family for six generations. After enumerating the geniuses who illustrated it before the time of John Sebastian, Forkel says,

"Not only the above-mentioned, but many other able composers of the earlier generations of the family might undoubtedly have obtained much more important musical offices, as well as a more extensive reputation, and a more brilliant fortune, if they had been inclined to leave their native province, and to make themselves known in other countries. But we do not find that any one of them ever felt an inclination for such an emigration. Temperate and frugal by nature and education, they required but little to live; and the intellectual enjoyment, which their art procured them, enabled them not only to be content without the gold chains, which used at that time to be given by great men to esteemed artists, as especial marks of honour, but also without the least envy to see them worn by others, who perhaps without these chains would not have been happy."

Nothing is more pleasing than the account of the jubilee which this family had once a year. As they were a large family, and scattered about in different cities, they met once a year and had this musical festival.

“ Their amusements during the time of their meeting were entirely musical. As the company wholly consisted of chanters, organists, and town musicians, who had all to do with the Church, and as it was besides a general custom to begin everything with religion, the first thing they did, when they were assembled, was to sing a hymn in chorus. From this pious commencement they proceeded to drolleries, which often made a very great contrast with it. They sang, for instance, popular songs, the contents of which are partly comic and partly licentious, all together, and extempore, but in such a manner that the several songs thus extemporized made a kind of harmony together, the words, however, in every part being different. They called this kind of extemporary chorus ‘a Quodlibet,’ and not only laughed heartily at it themselves, but excited an equally hearty and irresistible laughter in every body that heard them. Some persons are inclined to consider these *facetiae* as the beginning of comic operettas in Germany; but such quodlibets were usual in Germany at a much earlier period. I possess myself a printed collection of them, which was published at Vienna in 1542.”

In perfect harmony with what is intimated of the family, of their wise content, loving art, purely and religiously for its own sake, unallured by ambition or desire for excitement, deep and true, simple and modest in the virtues of domestic life, was the course of the greatest of them, John Sebastian. No man of whom we read has lived more simply the grand, quiet, manly life, “without haste, without rest.” Its features are few, its outline large and tranquil. His youth was a steady aspiration to the place nature intended him to fill; as soon as he was in that place, his sphere of full, equable activity, he knew it, and was content. After that he was known by his fruits. As for outward occasions and honours, it was with him as always with the “Happy Warrior,” who must

“ In himself possess his own desire
 Who *comprehends his trust*, and to the same
 Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
 And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait

Whom they must follow, on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna; if they come at all."

A pretty story of his childhood shows that he was as earnest in the attainment of excellence, as indifferent to notoriety.

"J. S. Bach was left an orphan at ten years of age, and was obliged to have recourse to an elder brother, John Christopher, who was organist at Ordruff. From him he received the first instructions in playing on the clavichord. But his inclination and talent for music must have been already very great at that time, since the pieces which his brother gave him to learn were so soon in his power, that he began with much eagerness to look out for some that were more difficult. He had observed that his brother had a book, in which were pieces by the most famous composers of the day, such as he wanted, and earnestly begged him to give it him. But it was constantly denied. His desire to possess the book was increased by the refusal, so that he at length sought means to get possession of it secretly. As it was kept in a cupboard, which had only a lattice door, and his hands were still small enough to pass through, so that he could roll up the book, which was merely stitched in paper, and draw it out, he did not long hesitate to make use of these favorable circumstances. But, for want of a candle, he could only copy it in moonlight nights; and it took six whole months before he could finish his laborious task. At length, when he thought himself safely possessed of the treasure, and intended to make good use of it in secret, his brother found it out, and took from him, without pity, the copy which had cost him so much pains; and he did not recover it till his brother's death, which took place soon after."

Without pity indeed! What a tale is told by these few words of all the child suffered from disappointment of the hopes and plans, which had been growing in his heart all those six months of secret toil; hopes and plans too, so legitimate, on which a true parent or guardian would have smiled such delighted approval! One can scarcely keep down the swelling heart at these instances of tyranny to children, far worse than the knouts and Siberia of the Russian despot, in this, that the domestic tyrant cannot be wholly forgetful of the pain he is inflicting, though he may be too stupid or too selfish to foresee the consequences of these early

wrongs, through long years of mental conflict. A nature so strong and kindly as that of Bach could not be crushed in such ways. But with characters of less force the consequences are more cruel. I have known an instance of life-long injury from such an act as this. An elder brother gave a younger a book; then, as soon as the child became deeply interested in reading it, tore out two or three leaves. Years after the blood boiled, and the eyes wept bitter tears of distrust in human sympathy, at remembrance of this little act of wanton wrong. And the conduct of Bach's brother is more coldly cruel.

The facts of his life are simple. Soon his great abilities displayed themselves, so as to win for him all that he asked from life, a moderate competency, a home, and a situation in which he could cultivate his talents with uninterrupted perseverance. A silent happiness lit up his days, deliberately, early he grew to giant stature, deeply honoured wherever known, only not more widely known because indifferent to being so. No false lure glitters on his life from any side. He was never in a hurry, nor did he ever linger on the syren shore, but passed by, like Orpheus, not even hearing their songs, so rapt was he in the hymns he was singing to the gods. /

Haydn is the untouched green forest in the fulness of a June day; Handel the illuminated garden, where splendid and worldly crowds pause at times in the dark alleys, soothed and solemnized by the white moonlight; with Mozart the nightingale sings, and the lonely heron waves his wings, beside the starlit, secret lake, on whose bosom gazes the white marble temple. Bach is the towering, snowy mountain, "itself earth's Rosy Star," and the green, sunny, unmasking valley, all in one. Earth and heaven are not lonely while such men live to answer to their meaning.

I had marked many passages which give a clear idea of Bach's vast intellectual comprehension, of the happy balance between

the intuitive and the reasoning powers in his nature, the depth of his self-reliance, the untiring severity of his self-criticism, and the glad, yet solemn religious fulness of his mental life. But already my due limits are overstepped, and I am still more desirous to speak at some length of Beethoven. I shall content myself with two or three passages, which not only indicate the peculiar scope of this musician, but are of universal application to whatever is good in art or literature.

Bombet mentions this anecdote of Jomelli.

“ On arriving at Bologna, he went to see the celebrated Father Martini, without making himself known, and begged to be received into the number of his pupils. Martini gave him a subject for a *fugue*; and finding that he executed it in a superior manner, ‘ Who are you?’ said he, ‘ are you making game of me? It is I who need to learn of you.’ ‘ I am Jomelli, the professor, who is to write the opera to be performed here next autumn, and I am come to ask you to teach me the great art of never being embarrassed by my own ideas.’ ”

There seems to have been no time in Bach’s life when he needed to ask this question, the great one which Genius ever asks of Friendship. He did not need to flash out into clearness in another atmosphere than his own. Always he seems the master, possessing, not possessed by, his idea. These creations did not come upon him as on the ancient prophets, dazzling, unexpected, ever flowing from the centre of the universe. He was not possessed by the muse; he had not intervals of the second sight. The thought and the symbol were one with him, and like Shakspeare, he evolved from his own centre, rather than was drawn to *the* centre. He tells the universe by living a self-centred world.

As becomes the greatest, he is not hasty, never presumptuous. We admire it in the child Mozart, that he executed at once the musical *tour de force* prepared by the Emperor Francis. We admire still more Bach’s manly caution and sense of the impor-

tance of his art, when visiting, at an advanced age, the great Frederic, who seems to have received him king-like.

“The musicians went with him from room to room, and Bach was invited everywhere to try and to play unpremeditated compositions. After he had gone on for some time, he asked the King to give him a subject for a fugue, in order to execute it immediately, without any preparation. The King admired the learned manner in which his subject was thus executed extempore; and, probably to see how far such art could be carried, expressed a wish to hear a fugue with six obligato parts. But as it is not every subject that is fit for such full harmony, Bach chose one himself, and immediately executed it, to the astonishment of all present, in the same magnificent and learned manner as he had done that of the King.”

The following anecdote shows the same deeply intellectual modesty and candour, and when compared with the inspired rapidity of Mozart, marks the distinction made by the French between “une savante originalité” and “une rayonnante originalité.”

“He at length acquired such a high degree of facility, and, we may almost say, unlimited power over his instrument in all the modes, that there were hardly any more difficulties for him. As well in his unpremeditated fantasies, as in executing his other compositions, in which it is well known that all the fingers of both hands are constantly employed, and have to make motions which are as strange and uncommon as the melodies themselves; he is said to have possessed such certainty that he never missed a note. He had besides such an admirable facility in reading and executing the compositions of others, (which, indeed, were all easier than his own,) that he once said to an acquaintance, that he really believed he could play everything, without hesitating, at the first sight. He was, however, mistaken; and the friend, to whom he had thus expressed his opinion, convinced him of it before a week was passed. He invited him one morning to breakfast, and laid upon the desk of his instrument, among other pieces, one which at the first glance appeared to be very trifling. Bach came, and, according to his custom, went immediately to the instrument, partly to play, partly to look over the music that lay on the desk. While he was turning over and playing them, his friend went into the

which was destined to make him change his opinion, and began to play it. But he had not proceeded far when he came to a passage at which he stopped. He looked at it, began anew, and again stopped at the same passage. 'No,' he called out to his friend, who was laughing to himself in the next room, at the same time going away from the instrument, 'one cannot play everything at first sight; it is not possible.'"

A few more extracts which speak for themselves.

"The clavichord and the organ are nearly related, but the style and mode of managing both instruments are as different as their respective destination. What sounds well, or expresses something on the clavichord, expresses nothing on the organ, and vice versa. The best player on the clavichord, if he is not duly acquainted with the difference in the destination and object of the two instruments, and does not know constantly how to keep it in view, will always be a bad performer on the organ, as indeed is usually the case. Hitherto I have met with only two exceptions. The one is John Sebastian himself, and the second his eldest son, William Friedemann. Both were elegant performers on the clavichord; but, when they came to the organ, no trace of the harpsichord player was to be perceived. Melody, harmony, motion, all was different; that is, all was adapted to the nature of the instrument and its destination. When I heard Will Friedemann on the harpsichord, all was delicate, elegant, and agreeable. When I heard him on the organ, I was seized with reverential awe. There, all was pretty, here, all was grand and solemn. The same was the case with John Sebastian, but both in a much higher degree of perfection. W. Friedemann was here but a child to his father, and he most frankly concurred in this opinion. The organ compositions of this extraordinary man are full of the expression of devotion, solemnity, and dignity; but his unpremeditated voluntaries on the organ, where nothing was lost in writing down, are said to have been still more devout, solemn, dignified, and sublime. What is it that is most essential in this art? I will say what I know; much, however, cannot be said, but must be felt."

Then after some excellent observations upon the organ, he says,

"Bach, even in his secular compositions, disdained every thing common; but in his compositions for the organ, he kept himself far more distant from it; so that here he does not appear like a man, but as a true disembodied spirit, who soars above everything mortal."

It does indeed seem, from all that is said of Bach on this score, that, as the organ was his proper instrument, and represents him, as the flute or violin might Mozart, so he that heard him on it enjoyed the sense of the true Miltonic Creation, thought too plenteous to be spoken of as rill, or stream, or fountain, but rolling and surging like a tide, marking its course by the large divisions of seas and continents.

I wish there was room to quote the fine story of the opera house at Berlin, p. 34, which shows how rapid and comprehensive was his intellectual sight in his own department; or the remarks on the nature of his harmony in that it was a multiplied melody, pp. 42, 43, or on the severe truth and dignity of his conduct to his pupils and the public, p. 76. But I must content myself with the following passages, which, beside, lose much by mutilation.

“The ideas of harmony and modulation can scarcely be separated, so nearly are they related to each other. And yet they are different. By harmony we must understand the concord or coincidence of the various parts; by modulation, their progression.

“In most composers you find that their modulation, or if you will, their harmony, advances slowly. In musical pieces to be executed by numerous performers, in large buildings, as, for example, in churches, where a loud sound can die away but slowly, this arrangement indisputably shows the prudence of a composer, who wishes to have his work produce the best possible effect. But in instrumental or chamber music, that slow progress is not a proof of prudence, but, far oftener, a sign that the composer was not sufficiently rich in ideas. Bach has distinguished this very well. In his great vocal compositions, he well knew how to repress his fancy, which, otherwise, overflowed with ideas; but, in his instrumental music this reserve was not necessary. As he, besides, never worked for the crowd, but always had in his mind his ideal of perfection, without any view to approbation or the like, he had no reason whatever for giving less than he had, and could give, and in fact he has never done this. Hence in the modulation of his instrumental works, every advance is a new thought, a constantly progressive life and motion, within the circle of the modes chosen, and those nearly related to them. Of the harmony which he adopts he retains the greatest part, but, at every advance he mingles

something related to it; and in this manner he proceeds to the end of a piece, so softly, so gently, and gradually, that no leap, or harsh transition is to be felt; and yet no bar (I may almost say, no part of a bar,) is like another. With him, every transition was required to have a connexion with the preceding idea, and appears to be a necessary consequence of it. He knew not, or rather he disdained those sudden sallies, by which many composers attempt to surprise their hearers. Even in his chromatics, the advances are so soft and tender, that we scarcely perceive their distances, though often very great."

"In other departments he had rivals; but in the fugue, and all the kinds of canon and counterpoint related to it, he stands quite alone, and so alone, that all around him, is, as it were, desert and void. * * * It (his fugue) fulfils all the conditions which we are otherwise accustomed to demand, only of more free species of composition. A highly characteristic theme, an uninterrupted principal melody, wholly derived from it, and equally characteristic from the beginning to the end; not mere accompaniment in the other parts, but in each of them an independent melody, according with the others, also from the beginning to the end; freedom, lightness, and fluency in the progress of the whole, inexhaustible variety of modulation combined with perfect purity; the exclusion of every arbitrary note, not necessarily belonging to the whole; unity and diversity in the style, rhythmus, and measure; and lastly, a life diffused through the whole, so that it sometimes appears to the performer or hearer, as if every single note were animated; these are the properties of Bach's fugue,—properties which excite admiration and astonishment in every judge, who knows what a mass of intellectual energy is required for the production of such works. I must say still more. All Bach's fugues, composed in the years of his maturity, have the above-mentioned properties in common; they are all endowed with equally great excellencies, but each in a different manner. Each has his own precisely defined character; and dependent upon that, its own turns in melody and harmony. When we know and can perform *one*, we really know only *one*, and can perform but *one*; whereas we know and can play whole folios full of fugues by other composers of Bach's time, as soon as we have comprehended and rendered familiar to our hand, the turns of a single one."

He disdained any display of his powers. If they were made obvious otherwise than in the beauty and fullness of what was produced, it was in such a way as this.

In musical parties, where quartettes or other fuller pieces of instrumental music were performed, he took pleasure in playing the tenor. With this instrument, he was, as it were, in the middle of the harmony, whence he could both hear and enjoy it, on both sides. When an opportunity offered, in such parties, he sometimes accompanied a trio or other pieces on the harpsichord. If he was in a cheerful mood, *and knew that the composer of the piece, if present, would not take it amiss*, he used to make extempore out of the figured bass a new trio, or of three single parts a quartette. These, however, are the only cases in which he proved to others how strong he was.

“He was fond of hearing the music of other composers. If he heard in a church a fugue for a full orchestra, and one of his two eldest sons stood near him, he always, as soon as he had heard the introduction to the theme, said beforehand what the composer ought to introduce, and what possibly might be introduced. If the composer had performed his work well, what he had said happened; then he rejoiced, and jogged his son to make him observe it.”

He did not publish a work till he was forty years of age. He never laid aside the critical file through all his life, so that an edition of his works, accompanied by his own corrections, would be the finest study for the musician.

This severe ideal standard, and unwearied application in realizing it, made his whole life a progress, and the epithet *old*, which too often brings to our minds associations of indolence or decay, was for him the title of honour. It is noble and imposing when Frederic the Second says to his courtiers, “with a kind of agitation, ‘Gentlemen, Old Bach has come.’”

“He laboured for himself, like every true genius; he fulfilled his own wish, satisfied his own taste, chose his subjects according to his own opinion, and lastly, derived the most pleasure from his own approbation. The applause of connoisseurs could not then fail him, and, in fact, never did fail him. How else could a real work of art be produced? The artist, who endeavours to make his works so as to suit some particular class of amateurs, either has no genius, or abuses it. To follow the prevailing taste of the many, needs, at the most, some dexterity in a very partial manner of treating tones. Artists of this description may be compared to

the mechanic, who must also make his goods so that his customers can make use of them. Bach never submitted to such conditions. He thought the artist may form the public, but that the public does not form the artist."

But it would please me best, if I could print here the whole of the concluding chapter of this little book. It shows a fulness and depth of feeling, objects are seen from a high platform of culture, which make it invaluable to those of us who are groping in a denser atmosphere after the beautiful. It is a slight scroll, which implies ages of the noblest effort, and so clear a perception of laws, that its expression, if excessive in the particular, is never extravagant on the whole; a true and worthy outpouring of homage, so true that its most technical details suggest the canons by which all the various exhibitions of man's genius are to be viewed, and silences, with silver clarion tone, the barking of partial and exclusive connoisseurship. The person who should republish such a book in this country would be truly a benefactor. Both this and the Life of Handel I have seen only in the London edition. The latter is probably out of print; but the substance of it, or rather the only pregnant traits from it have been given here. This life of Bach should be read, as its great subject should be viewed, as a whole.

The entertaining memoir of Beethoven by Ries and Wegeler has been, in some measure, made known to us through the English periodicals. I have never seen the book myself. That to which I shall refer is the life of Beethoven by Schindler, to whom Beethoven confided the task of writing it, in case of the failure of another friend, whom he somewhat preferred.

Schindler, if inadequate to take an observation of his subject from any very high point of view, has the merit of simplicity, fidelity, strict accuracy according to his power of discerning, and a devout reverence both for the art, and this greatest exemplar of the art. He is one of those devout Germans who can

cling for so many years to a single flower, nor feel that they have filled all its sweets. There are in Rome, Germans who give their lives to copy the great masters in the art of painting, nor ever feel that they can get deep enough into knowledge of the beauty already produced to pass out into reproduction. They would never weary through the still night of tending the lights for the grand Mass. Schindler is of this stamp ; a patient student, most faithful, and, those of more electric natures will perhaps say, a little dull.

He is very indignant at the more sprightly sketches of Ries and Bettina Brentano. Ries, indeed, is probably inaccurate in detail, yet there is a truth in the whole impression received from him. It was in the first fervour of his youth that he knew Beethoven ; he was afterwards long separated from him ; in his book we must expect to see rather Ries, under the influence of Beethoven, than the master's self. Yet there is always deeper truth in this manifestation of life through life, if we can look at it aright, than in any attempt at an exact copy of the original. Let only the reader read poetically, and *Germany* by Madame de Staël, *Wallenstein* by Schiller, *Beethoven* by Ries, are not the less true for being inaccurate. It is the same as with the *Madonna* by Guido, or by Murillo.

As for Bettina, it was evident to every discerning reader that the great man never talked so ; the whole narration is overflowed with Bettina rose-colour. Schindler grimly says, the good Bettina makes him appear as a *Word Hero* ; and we cannot but for a moment share his contempt, as we admire the granite laconism of Beethoven's real style, which is beyond any other, the shorthand of Genius. Yet "the good Bettina" gives us the soul of the matter. Her description of his manner of seizing a melody and then gathering together from every side all that belonged to it, and the saying, "other men are touched by something good. Artists are fiery ; they do not weep," are Beethoven's, whether

he really said them or not. "You say that Shakspeare never meant to express this! What then? his genius meant it!"

The impression Schindler gives of Beethoven differs from that given by Ries or Bettina only in this, that the giant is seen through uncoloured glass; the lineaments are the same in all the three memoirs.

The direction left by Beethoven himself to his biographer is as follows. "Tell the truth with severe fidelity of me and all connected with me, without regard to whom it may hit, whether others or myself."

He was born 17th Dec. 1770. It is pleasing to the fancy to know that his mother's name was Maria Magdalena. She died when he was seventeen, so that a cabalistic number repeats itself the magical three times in the very first statement of his destiny.

The first thirty years of his life were all sunshine. His genius was early acknowledged, and princely friends enabled him to give it free play, by providing for his simple wants in daily life. Notwithstanding his uncompromising democracy, which, from the earliest period, paid no regard to rank and power, but insisted that those he met should show themselves worthy as men and citizens, before he would have anything to do with them, he was received with joy into the highest circles of Vienna. Van Swieten, the emperor's physician, one of those Germans, who, after the labors of the day, find rest in giving the whole night to music, and who was so situated that he could collect round him all that was best in the art, was one of his firmest friends. Prince and Princess Lichnowsky constituted themselves his foster-parents, and were not to be deterred from their wise and tender care by the often perverse and impetuous conduct of their adopted son, who indeed tried them severely, for he was (*ein gewaltig natur*) "a vehement nature," that broke through all limits and always had to run his head against a barrier, before he could be convinced of its existence. Of the princess, Beethoven says:

“With love like that of a grandmother, she sought to educate and foster me, which she carried so far as often to come near having a glass bell put over me, lest somewhat unworthy should touch or even breathe on me.” Their house is described as “eine freihafen der Humanitat und feinem sitte,” the home of all that is genial, noble and refined.

In these first years, the displays of his uncompromising nature affect us with delight, for they have not yet that hue of tragedy, which they assumed after he was brought more decidedly into opposition with the world. Here wildly great and free, as afterwards sternly and disdainfully so, he is, waxing or waning, still the same orb; here more fairly, there more pathetically noble:

He early took the resolution, by which he held fast through life, “against criticisms or attacks of any kind, so long as they did not touch his honour, but were aimed solely at his artist-life, never to defend himself. He was not indifferent to the opinion of the good, but ignored as much as possible the assaults of the bad, even when they went so far as to appoint him a place in the mad-house.” For that vein in human nature, which has flowed unexhausted ever since the days of “I am not mad, most noble Festus,” making men class as magic or madness all that surpasses the range of their comprehension and culture, manifested itself in full energy among the contemporaries of Beethoven. When he published one of his greatest works, the critics declared him “*now* (in the very meridian of his genius) ripe for the mad-house.” For why? “We do not understand it; we never had such thoughts; we cannot even read and execute them.” Ah men! almost your ingratitude doth at times convince that you are wholly unworthy the visitations of the Divine!

But Beethoven “was an artist-nature;” he had his work to do, and could not stop to weep, either pitying or indignant tears. “If it amuses those people to say or to write such things of me,

do not disturb them," was his maxim, to which he remained true through all the calamities of his "artist-life."

Gentleness and forbearance were virtues of which he was incapable. His spirit was deeply loving, but stern. Incapable himself of vice or meanness, he could not hope anything from men that were not so. He could not try experiments; he could not pardon. If at all dissatisfied with a man, he had done with him forever. This uncompromising temper he carried out even in his friendliest relations. The moment a man ceased to be important to him or he to the man, he left off seeing him, and they did not meet again, perhaps for twenty years. But when they *did* meet, the connexion was full and true as at first. The inconveniences of such proceedings in the conventional world are obvious, but Beethoven knew only the world of souls.

"In man he saw only the man. Rank and wealth were to him mere accidents, to which he attached no importance. To bow before Mammon and his ministers he considered absolute blasphemy; the deepest degradation to the man who had genius for his dower. The rich man must show himself noble and beneficent, if he would be honoured by the least attention from Beethoven." "He thought that the Spirit, the Divine in man, must always maintain its preëminence over the material and temporary; that, being the immediate gift of the Creator, it obliged its possessor to go before other men as a guiding light."

How far his high feeling of responsibility, and clear sight of his own position in the universe were from arrogance, he showed always by his aversion to servile homage. He left one of his lodging houses because the people would crowd the adjacent bridge to gaze on him as he went out; another because the aristocratic proprietor, abashed before his genius, would never meet him without making so many humble reverences, as if to a domesticated god. He says, in one of the letters to Julietta, "I am persecuted by kindness, which I think I wish to deserve as little as I really do deserve it. Humility of man before man,—it pains me; and when I regard myself in connexion with the universe,

what am I? and what is he whom they name Greatest? And yet there is the godlike in man."

"Notwithstanding the many temptations to which he was exposed, he, like each other demigod, knew how to preserve his virtue without a stain. Thus his inner sense for virtue remained ever pure, nor could he suffer anything about him of dubious aspect on the moral side. In this respect he was conscious of no error, but made his pilgrimage through life in untouched maidenly purity. The serene muse, who had so highly gifted and elected him to her own service, gave in every wise to his faculties the upward direction, and protected him, even in artistical reference, against the slightest contact with vulgarity, which, in life as in art, was to him a torture."—"Ah, had he but carried the same clearness into the business transactions of his life!"

So sighs the friend, who thinks his genius was much impeded by the transactions, in which his want of skill entangled him with sordid, contemptible persons.

Thus in unbroken purity and proud self-respect, amid princely bounties and free, manly relations, in the rapid and harmonious development of his vast powers, passed the first thirty years of his life. But towards the close of that period, crept upon him the cruel disorder, to him of all men the most cruel, which immured him a prisoner in the heart of his own kingdom, and beggared him for the rest of his life of the delights he never ceased to lavish on others.

After his fate was decided he never complained, but what lay in the secret soul is shown by the following paper.

"During the summer he lived at Heiligenstadt, by the advice of his physician, and in the autumn wrote the following testament:—

"For my brothers Carl and — Beethoven.

"O ye men, who esteem or declare me unkind, morose, or misanthropic, what injustice you do me; you know not the secret causes of that which so seems. My heart and my mind were from childhood disposed to the tender feelings of good will. Even to perform great actions was I ever disposed. But think, what a fate is mine! I am a man, and yet I am a monster."

me, made worse by unwise physicians; that from year to year I have been deceived in the hope of growing better; finally constrained to the survey of this as a permanent evil, whose cure will require years, or is perhaps impossible. Born with a fiery, lively, temperament, even susceptible to the distractions of society, must I early sever myself, lonely pass my life. If I attempted, in spite of my ill, intercourse with others, O how cruelly was I then repulsed by the doubly gloomy experience of my bad hearing; and yet it was not possible for me to say to men, speak louder, scream, for I am deaf! Ah, how would it be possible for me to make known the weakness of a sense which ought to be more perfect in me than in others, a sense which I once possessed in the greatest perfection, in a perfection certainly beyond most of my profession. O I cannot do it. Therefore pardon, if you see me draw back when I would willingly mingle with you. My misfortune is a double woe, that through it I must be misunderstood. For me the refreshment of companionship, the finer pleasures of conversation, mutual outpourings can have no place. As an exile must I live! If I approach a company, a hot anguish falls upon me, while I fear to be put in danger of exposing my situation. So has it been this half year that I have passed in the country. The advice of my friendly physician, that I should spare my hearing, suited well my present disposition, although many times I have let myself be misled by the desire for society. But what humiliation, when some one stood near me, and from afar heard the flute, and I heard *nothing, or heard the Shepherd sing,** and I heard nothing. Such occurrences brought me near to despair; little was wanting that I should, myself, put an end to my life. Only she, Art, she held me back! Ah! it seemed to me impossible to leave the world before I had brought to light all which lay in my mind. And so I lengthened out this miserable life, so truly miserable, as that a swift change can throw me from the best state into the worst. *Patience*, it is said, I must now take for my guide. I have so. Constant, I hope, shall my resolution be to endure till the inexorable Fates shall be pleased to break the thread. Perhaps goes it better, perhaps not, I am prepared. Already in my twenty-eighth year constrained to become a philosopher. It is not easy, for the artist harder than any other man. O God, thou lookest down upon my soul, thou knowest that love to man and inclination to well-doing dwell there. O men, when you at some future time read this, then think that you have done me injustice, and the unhappy, let

him be comforted by finding one of his race, who in defiance of all hindrances of nature has done all possible to him to be received in the rank of worthy artists and men. You, my brothers, Carl and ———*, so soon as I am dead, if Professor Schmidt is yet living, pray him in my name that he will describe my disease, and add this writing to the account of it, that at least as much as possible the world may be reconciled with me after my death. At the same time I declare you two the heirs of my little property, (if I may call it so). Divide it honourably, agree, and help one another. What you have done against me has been, as you know, long since pardoned. Thee, brother Carl, I especially thank for thy lately shown attachment. My wish is that you may have a better life, freer from care than mine. Recommend to your children virtue, that alone can make happy, not gold. I speak from experience. For this it was that raised up myself from misery; this and my art I thank, that I did not end my life by my own hand. Farewell and love one another. All friends I thank, especially Prince Lichnowsky and Professor Schmidt. I wish the instruments given me by Prince L. to be preserved with care by one of you, yet let no strife arise between you on that account. So soon as they are needed for some more useful purpose, sell them. Joyful am I that even in the grave I may be of use to you. Thus with joy may I greet death; yet comes it earlier than I can unfold my artist powers, it will, notwithstanding my hard destiny, come too early, and I would wish it delayed; however I would be satisfied that it freed me from a state of endless suffering. Come when thou wilt, I go courageously to meet thee. Farewell, and forget me not wholly in death; I have deserved that you should not, for in my life I thought often of you, and of making you happy; be so.

“LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.

“Heiligenstadt, 6th October, 1802.”

“Postscript. 10th October, 1802.

“So take I then a sad farewell of thee. Yes! the beloved hope, which I brought hither, to be cured at least to a certain point, must now wholly leave me. As the leaves fall in autumn, are withered, so has also this withered for me. Almost as I came hither, so go I forth, even the high courage, which inspired me oft in the fair summer days, is vanished. O Providence, let once again a clear day of joy shine for me, so long already

* He seems to have forgotten at the moment the name of his younger brother.

has the inward echo of true joy been unknown to me. When, when, O God, can I feel it again in the temple of nature and of man?—Never? No! that would be too cruel!”

The deep love shown in these words, love such as only proud and strong natures know, was not only destined to be wounded in its general relations with mankind through this calamity. The woman he loved, the inspiring muse of some of his divinest compositions, to whom he writes, “Is not our love a true heavenly palace, also as firm as the fortress of heaven,” was unworthy. In a world where millions of souls are pining and perishing for want of an inexhaustible fountain of love and grandeur, this soul, which was indeed such an one, could love in vain. This eldest son, this rightful heir of nature, in some secret hour, writes at this period, “Only love, that alone could give thee a happier life. O my God, let me only find at last that which may strengthen me in virtue, which to me is lawful. A love which is permitted, (erlaubt).”

The prayer was unheard. He was left lonely, unsustained, unsolaced, to wrestle with, to conquer his fate.. Pierced here in the very centre of his life, exposed both by his misfortune and a nature which could neither anticipate nor contend with the designs of base men, to the anguish of meeting ingratitude on every side, abandoned to the guardianship of his wicked brothers, Beethoven walked in night, as regards the world, but within, the heavenly light ever overflowed him more and more.

Shall lesser beings repine that they do not receive their dues in this short life with such an example before them, how large the scope of eternal justice must be? Who can repine that thinks of Beethoven? His was indeed the best consolation of life. “To him a God gave to tell what he suffered,” as also the deep joys of knowledge that spring from suffering. As he descends to “the divine deeps of sorrow,” and calls up, with spells known

commanding than are known in regions of cheerful light, can we wish him a happier life? He has been baptized with fire, others only with water. He has given all his life and won the holy sepulchre and a fragment, at least, of the true cross. The solemn command, the mighty controul of various forces which makes us seem to hear

“Time flowing in the middle of the night,
And all things (rushing) to the day of doom,”

the searching through all the caverns of life for the deepest thought, and the winged uprising of feeling when it is attained; were not these wonders much aided by the calamity, which took this great genius from the outward world, and forced him to concentrate just as he had attained command of his forces?

Friendly affection, indeed, was not wanting to the great master; but who could be his equal friend? It was impossible; he might have found a love, but could not a friend in the same century with himself. But men were earnest to serve and women to venerate him. Schindler, as well as others, devoted many of the best years of life to him. A beautiful trait of affection is mentioned of the Countess Marie Erdödy, a friend dear to Beethoven, who, in the park which surrounds her Hungarian palace, erected a temple which she dedicated to him.

Beethoven had two brothers. The one, Johann, seems to have been rather stupid and selfish than actively bad. The character of his mind is best shown by his saying to the great master, “you will never *succeed* as well as I have.” We have all, probably, in memory instances where the reproving angel of the family, the one whose thinking mind, grace, and purity, may possibly atone for the worthless lives of all the rest, is spoken of as the unsuccessful member, because he has not laid up treasures there where moth or rust do corrupt, and ever as we hear such remarks, we are tempted to answer by asking, “what is the news from Sodom and Gomorrah?” But the farce of *Beethoven's* not

succeeding is somewhat broad, even in a world where many such sayings echo through the streets. At another time Johann, having become proprietor of a little estate, sent into Beethoven's lodging a new year card on which was written Johann van Beethoven *Gutsbesitzer*, (possessor of an estate,) to which the Master returned one inscribed Ludwig van Beethoven *Hirnbesitzer*, (possessor of a brain.) This *Gutsbesitzer* refused his great brother a trifling aid in his last illness, applied for by the friends who had constituted themselves his attendants, and showed towards him systematic selfishness and vulgarity of feeling. Carl, the other brother, under the mask of affectionate attention, plundered him both of his gains and the splendid presents often made him, and kept away by misrepresentations and falsehood all those who would have sincerely served him. This was the easier, in that the usual unfortunate effect of deafness of producing distrust was increased in Beethoven's case by signal instances of treachery, shown towards him in the first years of incapacity to manage his affairs as he had done before his malady. This sad distrust poisoned the rest of his life; but it was his only unworthiness; let us not dwell upon it. This brother, Carl, was Beethoven's evil genius, and his malignant influence did not cease with his life. He bequeathed to his brother the care of an only son, and Beethoven assumed the guardianship with that high feeling of the duties it involved, to be expected from one of his severe and pure temper. The first step he was obliged to take was to withdraw the boy from the society and care of his mother, an unworthy woman, under whose influence no good could be hoped from anything done for him. The law-suit, instituted for this purpose, which lasted several years, was very injurious to Beethoven's health, and effectually impeded the operations of his poetic power. For he was one "who so abhorred vice and meanness that he could not bear to hear them spoken of, much less suffer them near him; yet now was obliged to think of them, nay,

carefully to collect evidence in proof of their existence, and that in the person of a near connexion." This quite poisoned the atmosphere of his ideal world, and destroyed for the time all creative glow. On account of the *van* prefixed to his name, the cause was, at first, brought before the tribunal of nobility. They called on Beethoven to show them his credentials of noble birth. "Here!" he replied, putting his hand to head and heart. But as these nobles mostly derived their titles from the head and heart of some remote ancestor, they would not recognize this new peerage, and Beethoven, with indignant surprise, found himself referred to the tribunal of the common burghers.

The lawsuit was spun out by the obstinate resistance of his sister-in-law for several years, and when Beethoven at last obtained possession of the child, the seeds of vice were already sown in his breast. An inferior man would have been more likely to eradicate them than Beethoven, because a kindred consciousness might have made him patient. But the stern Roman spirit of Beethoven could not demand less than virtue, less than excellence, from the object of his care. For the youth's sake he made innumerable sacrifices; toiled for him as he would not for himself, was lavish of all that could conduce to his true good, but imperiously demanded from him truth, honour, purity and aspiration. No tragedy is deeper than the perusal of his letters to the young man, so brief and so significant, so stern and so tender. The joy and love at every sign of goodness, the profound indignation at failure and falsehood, the power of forgiving but not of excusing, the sentiment of the true value of life, so rocky calm, that with all its height it never seems exalted, make these letters a biblical chapter in the protest of modern days against the backslidings of the multitude. The lover of man, the despiser of men, he who writes, "Recommend to your children virtue; that alone can make happy, not gold; *I speak from experience*," is fully painted in these letters.

In a lately published novel, "Night and Morning," Bulwer has well depicted the way in which a strong character overshoots its mark in the care of a weak one. The belief of Philip that his weaker brother will abide by a conviction or a promise, with the same steadfastness that he himself could; the unfavourable action of his disinterested sacrifices on the character of his charge, and the impossibility that the soft, selfish child should sympathize with the conflicts or decisions of the strong and noble mind; the undue rapidity with which Philip draws inferences, false to the subject because too large for it; all this tragedy of common life is represented with Rembrandt power of shadow in the history of Beethoven and his nephew. The ingratitude of the youth is unsurpassed, and the nature it wronged was one of the deepest capacity for suffering from the discovery of such baseness. Many years toiled on the sad drama; its catastrophe was the death of this great master, caused by the child of his love neglecting to call a physician, because he wanted to play at billiards.

His love was unworthy; his adopted child unworthy; his brothers unworthy. Yet though his misfortunes in these respects seem singular, they sprang from no chance. Here, as elsewhere, "mind and destiny are two names for one idea." His colossal step terrified those around him; they wished him away from the earth, lest he should trample down their mud-hovels; they bound him in confiding sleep, or, Judas-like, betrayed with a base kiss of fealty. His genius excited no respect in narrow minds; his entire want of discretion in the economy of life left him, they thought, their lawful prey. Yet across the dark picture shines a gleam of almost unparalleled lustre, for "she, Art, she held him up."

I will not give various instances of failure in promises from the rich and noble, piracy from publishers, nor even some details of his domestic plagues, in which he displays a breadth of hu-

I will not give any of these, nor any of his letters, because the limits forbid to give them all, and they require light from one another. In such an account as the present, a mere sketch is all that can be attempted.

A few passages will speak for themselves. Goethe neglected to lend his aid to the artist for whom he had expressed such admiration, at a time when he might have done so without any inconvenience. Perhaps Beethoven's letter (quoted No. V. of the Dial, Essay on Goethe) may furnish an explanation of this. Cherubini omitted to answer Beethoven's affectionate and magnanimous letter, though he complied with the request it contained. But "the good Bettina" was faithful to her professions, and of essential use to Beethoven, by interesting her family in the conduct of his affairs.

He could not, for any purpose, accommodate himself to courts, or recognize their claims to homage. Two or three orders given him for works, which might have secured him the regard of the imperial family, he could not obey. Whenever he attempted to compose them, he found that the degree of restriction put upon him by the Emperor's taste hampered him too much. The one he did compose for such a purpose, the "Glorreiche Augenblick," Schindler speaks of as one of the least excellent of his works.

He could not bear to give lessons to the Archduke Rudolph, both because he detested giving regular lessons at all, and because he could not accommodate himself to the ceremonies of a court. Indeed it is evident enough from a letter of the Archduke's, quoted by Schindler as showing most condescending regard, how unfit it was for the lion-king to dance in gilded chains amid these mummeries.

Individuals in that princely class he admired, and could be just to, for his democracy was very unlike that fierce vulgar radicalism which assumes that the rich and great *must* be bad. His was only a repudiation of the right of the rich and great to be

seated on a throne, as clearly as if at a cobbler's stall. The Archduke Karl, to whom Körner dedicated his heroic muse, was the object of his admiration also. The Empress of Russia, too, he admired.

"Whoever wished to learn of him was obliged to follow his steps everywhere, for to teach, or say anything, at an appointed time was to him impossible. Also he would stop immediately, if he found his companion not sufficiently versed in the matter to keep step with him." He could not harangue; he must always be drawn out.

Amid all the miseries of his housekeeping or other disturbances, (and here, did space permit, I should like to quote his humorous notice of his "four bad days," when he was almost starved,) he had recourse to his art. "He would be fretted a little while; then snatch up the score and write 'noten im nothen,' as he was wont to call them, and forget the plague."

When quite out of health and spirits he restored himself by the composition of a grand mass. This "great, solemn mass," as he calls it in his letter to Cherubini, was offered to the different courts of Europe for fifty ducats. The Prussian ambassador in a diplomatic letter attempted to get it for an order and ribbon. Beethoven merely wrote in reply, "fifty ducats." He indeed was as disdainful of gold chains and orders as Bach was indifferent to them.

Although thus haughty, so much so that he would never receive a visit from Rossini, because, though he admitted that the Italian had genius, he thought he had not cultivated it with that devout severity proper to the artist, and was, consequently, corrupting the public taste, he was not only generous in his joy at any exhibition of the true spirit from others, but tenderly grateful for intelligent sympathy with himself, as is shown in the following beautiful narratives.

"Countess S. brought him on her return from —, German words by Herr Scholz, written for his first mass. He opened the paper as we were seated together at the table. When he came to the 'Qui tollis,' tears streamed from his eyes, and he was obliged to stop, so deeply was he moved by the inexpressibly beautiful words. He cried, 'Ja! so habe ich gefühlt, als ich dieses schrieb,' 'yes, this was what I felt when I wrote it.' It was the first and last time I ever saw him in tears."

They were such tears as might have been shed on the jubilee of what he loved so much, Schiller's Ode to Joy.

"Be welcome, millions,
This embrace for the whole world."

Happy the man, who gave the bliss to Beethoven of feeling his thought not only recognised, but understood. Years of undiscerning censure, and scarcely less undiscerning homage, are obliterated by the one true vibration from the heart of a fellow-man. *Then* the genius is at home on earth, when another soul knows not only what he writes, but what he felt when he wrote it. "The music is not the lyre nor the hand which plays upon it, but when the two meet, that arises which is neither, but gives each its place."

A pleasure almost as deep was given him on this occasion. Rossini had conquered the German world also; the public had almost forgotten Beethoven. A band of friends, in whose hearts the care for his glory and for the high, severe culture of art was still living, wrote him a noble letter, in which they entreated him to give to the public one of his late works, and, by such a musical festival, eclipse at once these superficial entertainments. The spirit of this letter is thoughtful, tender, and shows so clearly the German feeling as to the worship of the beautiful, that it would have been well to translate it, but that it is too long. It should be a remembrancer of pride and happiness to those who signed their names to it. Schindler knew when it was to be sent, and after Beethoven had time to read it, he went to him.

"I found Beethoven with the memorial in his hand. With an air of unwonted serenity, he reached it to me, placing himself at the window to gaze at the clouds drawing past. His inly deep emotion could not escape my eye. After I had read the paper I laid it aside, and waited in silence for him to begin the conversation. After a long pause, during which his looks constantly followed the clouds, he turned round, and said, in an elevated tone that betrayed his deep emotion, 'Es ist doch recht schön. Es freut mich.' 'It is indeed right fair. It rejoices me.' I assented by a motion of the head. He then said, 'Let us go into the free air.' When we were out he spoke only in monosyllables, but the spark of desire to comply with their requests glimmered visibly in him."

This musical festival at last took place after many difficulties, caused by Beethoven's obstinacy in arranging all the circumstances in his own way. He could never be brought to make allowance anywhere for ignorance or incapacity. So it must be or no how! He could never be induced to alter his music on account of the incapacity of the performers, (the best, too, on that occasion, anywhere to be had,) for going through certain parts. So that they were at last obliged to alter parts in their own fashion, which was always a great injury to the final effect of his works. They were at this time unwearied in their efforts to please him, though Sontag playfully told him he was "a very tyrant to the singing organs."

This festival afforded him a complete triumph. The audience applauded and applauded, till, at one time, when the acclamations rose to their height, Sontag perceiving that Beethoven did not hear, as his face was turned from the house, called his attention. The audience then, as for the first time realizing the extent of his misfortune, melted into tears, then all united in a still more rapturous expression of homage. For once at least the man excited the tenderness, the artist the enthusiasm he deserved.

His country again forgot one who never could nor would call attention to himself; she forgot in the day him for whom she in the age cherishes an immortal reverence, and the London Phil-

harmonic Society had the honour of ministering to the necessities of his last illness. The generous eagerness with which they sent all that his friendly attendants asked, and offered more whenever called for, was most grateful to Beethoven's heart, which had in those last days been frozen by such ingratitude. It roused his sinking life to one last leap of flame; his latest days were passed in revolving a great work which he wished to compose for the society, and which those about him thought would, if finished, have surpassed all he had done before.

No doubt, if his situation had been known in Germany, his country would have claimed a similar feeling from him. For she was not to him a step-dame; and, though in his last days taken up with newer wonders, would not, had his name been spoken, have failed to listen and to answer.

Yet a few more interesting passages. He rose before daybreak both in winter and summer, and worked till two or three o'clock, rarely after. He would never correct, to him the hardest task, as, like all great geniuses, he was indefatigable in the use of the file, in the evening. Often in the midst of his work he would run out into the free air for half an hour or more, and return laden with new thoughts. When he felt this impulse he paid no regard to the weather.

Plato and Shakspeare were his favourite authors; especially he was fond of reading Plato's Republic. He read the Greek and Roman classics much, but in translations, for his education, out of his art, was limited. He also, went almost daily to coffee-houses, where he read the newspapers, going in and out by the back door. If he found he excited observation, he changed his haunt.

"He tore without ceremony a composition submitted to him by the great Hummel, which he thought bad. Moscheles, dreading a similar fate for one of his which was to pass under his criticism, wrote at the bottom of the last page, 'Finis. With the help of God.' Beethoven wrote beneath, 'Man, help thyself.'"

Obviously a new edition of *Hercules and the Wagoner*.

"He was the most open of men, and told unhesitatingly all he thought, unless the subject were art and artists. On these subjects he was often inaccessible, and put off the inquirer with wit or satire." "On two subjects he would never talk, thorough bass and religion. He said they were both things complete within themselves, (in sich abgeschlossene dinge,) about which men should dispute no farther."

"As to the productions of his genius, let not a man or a nation, if yet in an immature stage, seek to know them. They require a certain degree of ripeness in the inner man to be understood.

"From the depth of the mind arisen, she, (Poesie,) is only to the depth of the mind either useful or intelligible."

I cannot conclude more forcibly than by quoting Beethoven's favourite maxim. It expresses what his life was, and what the life must be of those who would become worthy to do him honour.

"The barriers are not yet erected which can say to aspiring talent and industry, thus far and no farther."

Beethoven is the only one of these five artists whose life can be called unfortunate. They all found early the means to unfold their powers, and a theatre on which to display them. But Beethoven was, through a great part of his public career, deprived of the satisfaction of guiding or enjoying the representation of his thoughts. He was like a painter who could never see his pictures after they are finished. Probably, if he could himself have directed the orchestra, he would have been more pliable in making corrections with an eye to effect. Goethe says that no one can write a successful drama without familiarity with the stage, so as to know what can be expressed, what must be merely indicated. But in Beethoven's situation, there was not this reaction, so that he clung more perseveringly to the details of his work than great geniuses do, who live in more immediate contact with the outward world. Such an one will, indeed, always answer like Mozart to an inquirer, "The

notes as there should be." But a habit of intercourse with the minds of men gives an instinctive tact as to meeting them, and Michel Angelo, about to build St. Peter's, takes into consideration, not only his own idea of a cathedral, but means, time, space, and prospects.

But the misfortune, which fettered the outward energies, deepened the thought of Beethoven. He travelled inward, downward, till downward was shown to be the same as upward, for the centre was passed.

Like all princes, he made many ingrates, and his powerful lion nature, was that most capable of suffering from the amazement of witnessing baseness. But the love, the pride, the faith, which survive such pangs are those which make our stair to heaven. Beethoven was not only a poet, but a victorious poet, for having drunk to its dregs the cup of bitterness, the fount of inward nobleness remained undefiled. Unbeloved, he could love; deceived in other men, he yet knew himself too well to despise human nature; dying from ingratitude, he could still be grateful.

Schindler thinks his genius would have been far more productive, if he had had a tolerably happy home, if instead of the cold discomfort that surrounded him, he had been blessed, like Mozart, with a gentle wife, who would have made him a sanctuary in her unwearied love. It is, indeed, inexpressibly affecting to find the "vehement nature," even in his thirty-first year, writing thus; "At my age one sighs for an equality, a harmony of outward existence," and to know that he never attained it. But the lofty ideal of the happiness which his life could not attain, shone forth not the less powerfully from his genius. The love of his choice was not "firm as the fortress of heaven," but his heart remained the gate to that fortress. During all his latter years, he never complained, nor did Schindler ever hear him say that he was

tented that earth should not have offered him a home; where is the woman who would have corresponded with what we wish from his love? Where is the lot in which he could have reposed with all that grandeur of aspect in which he now appears to us? Where Jupiter, the lustrous, lordeth, there may be a home for thee, Beethoven.

We will not shrink from the dark clouds which became to his overflowing light cinctures of pearl and opal; we will not, even by a wish, seek to amend the destiny through which a divine thought glows so clearly. Were there no *Cedipuses* there would be no *Antigones*.

Under no other circumstances could Beethoven have ministered to his fellows in the way he himself indicates.

"The unhappy man, let him be comforted by finding one of his race who in defiance of all hinderances of nature, has done all possible to him to be received in the rank of worthy artists and men."

In three respects these artists, all true artists, resemble one another. Clear decision. The intuitive faculty speaks clear in those devoted to the worship of Beauty. They are not subject to mental conflict, they ask not counsel of experience. They take what they want as simply as the bird goes in search of its proper food, so soon as its wings are grown.

Like nature they love to work for its own sake. The philosopher is ever seeking the thought through the symbol, but the artist is happy at the implication of the thought in his work. He does not reason about "religion or thorough bass." His answer is Haydn's, "I thought it best so." From each achievement grows up a still higher ideal, and when his work is finished, it is nothing to the artist who has made of it the step by which he ascended, but while he was engaged in it, it was all to him, and filled his soul with a parental joy.

They do not criticise, but affirm. They have no need to deny

aught, much less ~~on~~ another. All excellence to them was genial; imperfection only left room for new creative power to display itself. An everlasting yes breathes from the life, from the work of the artist. Nature echoes it, and leaves to society the work of saying no, if it will. But it will not, except for the moment. It weans itself for the moment, and turns pettishly away from genius, but soon stumbling, groping, and lonely, cries aloud for its nurse. The age cries *now*, and what an answer is prophesied by such harbinger stars as these at which we have been gazing. We will engrave their names on the breastplate, and wear them as a talisman of hope.

A RECORD OF IMPRESSIONS

PRODUCED BY THE EXHIBITION OF MR. ALLSTON'S PICTURES IN THE
SUMMER OF 1839.

THIS is a record of impressions. It does not aspire to the dignity of criticism. The writer is conscious of an eye and taste, not sufficiently exercised by study of the best works of art, to take the measure of one who has a claim to be surveyed from the same platform. But, surprised at finding that an exhibition, intended to promote thought and form the tastes of our public, has called forth no expression* of what it was to so many, who almost daily visited it; and believing that comparison and discussion of the impressions of individuals is the best means to ascertain the sum of the whole, and raise the standard of taste, I venture to offer what, if not true in itself, is at least true to the mind of one observer, and may lead others to reveal more valuable experiences.

Whether the arts can ever be at home among us; whether the desire now manifested to cultivate them be not merely one of our modes of imitating older nations; or whether it springs from a need of balancing the bustle and care of daily life by the unfolding of our calmer and higher nature, it is at present difficult to decide. If the latter, it is not by unthinking repetition of the technics of foreign connoisseurs, or by a servile reliance on the judgment of those, who assume to have been formed by a few

* Since the above was written, we see an article on the Exhibition in the

hasty visits to the galleries of Europe, that we shall effect an object so desirable, but by a faithful recognition of the feelings naturally excited by works of art, not indeed flippant, as if our raw, uncultivated nature was at once competent to appreciate those finer manifestations of nature, which slow growths of ages and peculiar aspects of society have occasionally brought out, to testify to us what we may and should be. We know it is not so; we know that if such works are to be assimilated at all by those who are not under the influences that produced them, it must be by gradually educating us to their own level. But it is not blind faith that will educate us, that will open the depths and clear the eye of the mind, but an examination which cannot be too close, if made in the spirit of reverence and love.

It was as an essay in this kind that the following pages were written. They are pages of a journal, and their form has not been altered, lest any attempt at a more fair and full statement should destroy that freshness and truth of feeling, which is the chief merit of such.

July, 1839.

On the closing of the Allston exhibition, where I have spent so many hours, I find myself less a gainer than I had expected, and feel that it is time to look into the matter a little, with such a torch or penny rush candle as I can command.

I have seen most of these pictures often before; the and Valentine when only sixteen. The effect they produced upon me was so great, that I suppose it was not possible for me to avoid expecting too large a benefit from the artist.

The calm and meditative cast of these pictures, the ideal beauty that shone *through* rather than *in* them, and the harmony of colouring were as unlike anything else I saw, as the Vicar of Wakefield to Cooper's novels. I seemed to recognise in painting that self-possessed elegance, that transparent depth, which I most admire in literature: I thought with delight that such a

this had been able to grow up in our bustling, reasonable community, that he had kept his foot upon the ground, yet never lost sight of the rose-clouds of beauty floating above him. I saw, too, that he had not been troubled, but possessed his own soul with the blindest patience; and I hoped, I scarce knew what; probably the *mot d'enigme* for which we are all looking. How the poetical mind can live and work in peace and good faith! how it may unfold to its due perfection in an unpoetical society!

From time to time I have seen other of these pictures, and they have always been to me sweet silvery music, rising by its clear tone to be heard above the din of life; long forest glades glimmering with golden light, longingly eyed from the window of some crowded drawing room.

But now, seeing so many of them together, I can no longer be content merely to feel, but must judge these works. I must try to find the centre, to measure the circumference; and I fare somewhat as I have done, when I have seen in periodicals detached thoughts by some writer, which seemed so full of meaning and suggestion, that I would treasure them up in my memory, and think about them, till I had made a picture of the author's mind, which his works when I found them collected would not justify. Yet the great writer would go beyond my hope and abash my fancy; should not the great painter do the same?

Yet, probably, I am too little aware of the difficulties the artist encounters, before he can produce anything excellent, fully to appreciate the greatness he has shown. Here, as elsewhere, I suppose the first question should be, What ought we to expect under the circumstances?

There is no poetical ground-work ready for the artist in our country and time. Good deeds appeal to the understanding. Our religion is that of the understanding. We have no old established faith, no hereditary romance, no such stuff as Catholicism, Chivalry afforded. What is most dignified in the Puritanic

modes of thought is not favourable to beauty. The habits of an industrial community are not propitious to delicacy of sentiment.

He, who would paint human nature, must content himself with selecting fine situations here and there; and he must address himself, not to a public which is not educated to prize him, but to the small circle within the circle of men of taste.

If, like Wilkie or Newton, he paints direct from nature, only selecting and condensing, or choosing lights and draperies, I suppose he is as well situated now as he could ever have been; but if, like Mr. Allston, he aims at the Ideal, it is by no means the same. He is in danger of being sentimental and picturesque, rather than spiritual and noble. Mr. Allston has not fallen into these faults; and if we can complain, it is never of blemish or falsity, but of inadequacy. Always he has a high purpose in what he does, never swerves from his aim, but sometimes fails to reach it.

The Bible, familiar to the artist's youth, has naturally furnished subjects for his most earnest efforts. I will speak of four pictures on biblical subjects, which were in this exhibition.

Restoring the dead man by the touch of the Prophet's Bones. I should say there was a want of artist's judgment in the very choice of the subject.

In all the miracles where Christ and the Apostles act a part, and which have been favourite subjects with the great painters, poetical beauty is at once given to the scene by the moral dignity, the sublime exertion of faith on divine power in the person of the main actor. He is the natural centre of the picture, and the emotions of all present grade from and cluster round him. So in a martyrdom, however revolting or oppressive the circumstances, there is room in the person of the sufferer for a similar expression, a central light which shall illuminate and dignify all round it.

has the disagreeable effect of mummery. In this picture the foreground is occupied by the body of the patient in that state of deadly rigidity and pallor so offensive to the sensual eye. The mind must reason the eye out of an instinctive aversion, and force it to its work,—always an undesirable circumstance.

In such a picture as that of the *Massacre of the Innocents*, painful as the subject is, the beauty of forms in childhood, and the sentiment of maternal love, so beautiful even in anguish, charm so much as to counterpoise the painful emotions. But here, not only is the main figure offensive to the sensual eye, thus violating one principal condition of art; it is incapable of any expression at such a time beyond that of physical anguish during the struggle of life suddenly found to re-demand its dominion. Neither can the assistants exhibit any emotions higher than those of surprise, terror, or, as in the case of the wife, an overwhelming anxiety of suspense.

The grouping and colouring of this picture are very good, and the individual figures managed with grace and discrimination, though without much force.

The subjects of the other three pictures are among the finest possible, grand no less than beautiful, and of the highest poetical interest. They present no impediment to the manifestation of genius. Let us look first at *Jeremiah in prison dictating to Baruch*.

The strength and dignity of the Jew physique, and the appropriateness of the dress, allowed fair play to the painter's desire to portray inspiration manifesting itself by a suitable organ. As far as the accessories and grouping of the figures nothing can be better. The form of the prophet is brought out in such noble relief, is in such fine contrast to the pale and feminine sweetness of the scribe at his feet, that for a time you are satisfied. But by and by you begin to doubt, whether this picture is not rather imposing than majestic. The dignity of the prophet's ap-

pearance seems to lie rather in the fine lines of the form and drapery, than in the expression of the face. It was well observed by one who looked on him, that, if the eyes were cast down, he would become an ordinary man. This is true, and the expression of the bard must not depend on a look or gesture, but beam with mild electricity from every feature. Allston's Jeremiah is not the mournfully indignant bard, but the robust and stately Jew, angry that men will not mark his word and go his way. But Baruch is admirable! His overwhelmed yet willing submission, the docile faith which turns him pale, and trembles almost tearful in his eye, are given with infinite force and beauty. The *coup d'œil* of this picture is excellent, and it has great merit, but not the highest.

Miriam. There is hardly a subject which, for the combination of the sublime with the beautiful could present greater advantages than this. Yet this picture also, with all its great merits, fails to satisfy our highest requisitions.

I could wish the picture had been larger, and that the angry clouds and swelling sea did not need to be looked for as they do. For the whole attention remains so long fixed on the figure of Miriam, that you cannot for some time realize who she is. You merely see this bounding figure, and the accessories are so kept under, that it is difficult to have the situation full in your mind, and feel that you see not merely a Jewish girl dancing, but the representative of Jewry rescued and triumphant! What a figure this might be! The character of Jewish beauty is so noble and profound! This maiden had been nurtured in a fair and highly civilized country, in the midst of wrong and scorn indeed, but beneath the shadow of sublime institutions. In a state of abject bondage, in a catacomb as to this life, she had embalmed her soul in the memory of those days, when God walked with her fathers, and did for their sakes such mighty works. Amid all the pains and penances of slavery, the memory of Joseph, the

presence of Moses, exalt her soul to the highest pitch of national pride. The chords had of late been strung to their greatest tension, by the series of prodigies wrought in behalf of the nation of which her family is now the head. Of these the last and grandest had just taken place before her eyes.

Imagine the stately and solemn beauty with which such nurture and such a position might invest the Jewish Miriam. Imagine her at the moment when her soul would burst at last the shackles in which it had learned to move freely and proudly, when her lips were unsealed, and she was permitted before her brother, deputy of the Most High, and chief of their assembled nation, to sing the song of deliverance. Realize this situation, and oh, how far will this beautiful picture fall short of your demands!

The most unimaginative observers complain of a want of depth in the eye of Miriam. For myself, I make the same complaint, as much as I admire the whole figure. How truly is she upborne, what swelling joy and pride in every line of her form! And the face, though inadequate, is not false to the ideal. Its beauty is mournful, and only wants the heroic depth, the cavernous flame of eye, which should belong to such a face in such a place.

The Witch of Endor is still more unsatisfactory. What a tragedy was that of the stately Saul, ruined by his perversity of will, despairing, half mad, refusing to give up the sceptre which he feels must in a short time be wrenched from his hands, degrading himself to the use of means he himself had forbid as unlawful and devilish, seeking the friend and teacher of his youth by means he would most of all men disapprove. The mournful significance of the crisis, the stately aspect of Saul as celebrated in the history, and the supernatural events which had filled his days, gave authority for investing him with that sort of beauty and majesty proper to archangels ruined. What have we here? I don't

know what is generally thought about the introduction of a ghost on canvass, but it is to me as ludicrous as the introduction on the stage of the ghost in Hamlet (*in his night-gown*) as the old play book direction was. The effect of such a representation seems to me unattainable in a picture. There cannot be due distance and shadowy softness.

Then what does the picture mean to say? In the chronicle, the witch, surprised and affrighted at the apparition, reproaches the king, "Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul."

But here the witch (a really fine figure, fierce and *prononcé* as that of a Norna should be) seems threatening the king, who is in an attitude of theatrical as well as degrading dismay. To me this picture has no distinct expression, and is wholly unsatisfactory, maugre all its excellencies of detail.

In fine, the more I have looked at these pictures, the more I have been satisfied that the grand historical style did not afford the scope most proper to Mr. Allston's genius. The Prophets and Sibyls are for the Michael Angelos. The Beautiful is Mr. Allston's dominion. There he rules as a Genius, but in attempts such as I have been considering, can only show his appreciation of the stern and sublime thoughts he wants force to reproduce.

But on his own ground we can meet the painter with almost our first delight.

A certain bland delicacy enfolds all these creations as an atmosphere. Here is no effort, they have floated across the painter's heaven on the golden clouds of phantasy.

These pictures (I speak here only of figures, of the landscapes a few words anon) are almost all in repose. The most beautiful are Beatrice, The Lady reading a Valentine, The Evening Hymn, Rosalie, The Italian Shepherd Boy, Edwin, Lorenzo and Jessica. The excellence of these pictures is subjective and even feminine. They tell us the painter's ideal of character. A

of emotion, with a habit of reverie. Not one of these beings is in a state of *epanchement*, not one is, or perhaps could be, thrown off its equipoise. They are, even the softest, characterized by entire though unconscious self-possession.

While looking at them would be always coming up in my mind the line,

“The genius loci, feminine and fair.”

Grace, grace always.

Mr. Allston seems to have an exquisite sensibility to colour, and a great love for drapery. The last sometimes leads him to direct our attention too much to it, and sometimes the accessories are made too prominent; we look too much at shawls, curtains, rings, feathers, and carcanets.

I will specify two of these pictures, which seem to me to indicate Mr. Allston's excellences as well as any.

The Italian Shepherd boy is seated in a wood. The form is almost nude, and the green glimmer of the wood gives the flesh the polished whiteness of marble. He is very beautiful, this boy; and the beauty, as Mr. Allston loves it best, has not yet unfolded all its leaves. The heart of the flower is still a perfumed secret. He sits as if he could sit there forever, gracefully lost in reverie, steeped, if we may judge from his mellow brown eye, in the present loveliness of nature, in the dimly anticipated ecstasies of love.

Every part of nature has its peculiar influence. On the hill-top one is roused, in the valley soothed, beside the waterfall absorbed. And in the wood, who has not, like this boy, walked as far as the excitement of exercise would carry him, and then, with “blood listening in his frame,” and heart brightly awake, seated himself on such a bank. At first he notices everything, the clouds doubly soft, the sky deeper blue, as seen shimmering through the leaves, the fyttes of golden light seen through the

long glades, the skimming of a butterfly ready to light on some starry wood-flower, the nimble squirrel peeping archly at him, the flutter and wild notes of the birds, the whispers and sighs of the trees,—gradually he ceases to mark any of these things, and becomes lapt in the Elysian harmony they combine to form. Who has ever felt this mood understands why the observant Greek placed his departed great ones in groves. While, during this trance, he hears the harmonies of Nature, he seems to become her and she him; it is truly the mother in the child, and the Hamadryads look out with eyes of tender twilight approbation from their beloved and loving trees. Such an hour lives for us again in this picture.

Mr. Allston has been very fortunate in catching the shimmer and glimmer of the woods, and tempering his greens and browns to their peculiar light.

Beatrice. This is spoken of as Dante's Beatrice, but I should think can scarcely have been suggested by the Divine Comedy. The painter merely having in mind how the great Dante loved a certain lady called Beatrice, embodied here his own ideal of a poet's love.

The Beatrice of Dante was, no doubt, as pure, as gentle, as high-bred, but also possessed of much higher attributes than this fair being.

How fair, indeed, and not unmeet for a poet's love. But there lies in her no germ of the celestial destiny of Dante's saint. What she is, what she can be, it needs no Dante to discover.

She is not a lustrous, bewitching beauty, neither is she a high and poetic one. She is not a concentrated perfume, nor a flower, nor a star; yet somewhat has she of every creature's best. She has the golden mean, without any touch of the mediocre. She can venerate the higher and compassionate the lower, and do to

velvet-soft, her mild and modest eyes have tempered all things round her, till no rude sound invades her sphere; yet, if need were, she could resist with as graceful composure as she can favour or bestow.

No vehement emotion shall heave that bosom, and the tears shall fall on those cheeks more like dew than rain. Yet are her feelings delicate, profound, her love constant and tender, her resentment calm but firm.

Fair as a maid, fairer as a wife, fairest as a lady mother and ruler of a household, she were better suited to a prince than a poet. Even if no prince could be found worthy of her, I would not wed her to a poet, if he lived in a cottage. For her best graces demand a splendid setting to give them their due lustre, and she should rather enhance than cause her environment.

There are three pictures in the comic kind, which are good. It is genteel comedy, not rich, easily taken in and left, but having the lights and shades well marked. They show a gentlemanlike playfulness. In *Catharine and Petruchio*, the Gremio is particularly good, and the tear-distained Catharine, whose head, shoulder, knee, and foot seem to unite to spell the word *Pout*, is next best.

The Sisters—a picture quite unlike those I have named—does not please me much, though I should suppose the execution remarkably good. It is not in repose nor in harmony, nor is it rich in suggestion, like the others. It aims to speak, but says little, and is not beautiful enough to fill the heart with its present moment. To me it makes a break in the chain of thought the other pictures had woven.

Scene from Gil Blas—also unlike the other in being perfectly objective, and telling all its thought at once. It is a fine painting.

Mother and Child. A lovely little picture. But there is to my taste an air of got up naiveté and delicacy in it. It seems

selected, arranged by "an intellectual effort." It did not flow into the artist's mind like the others. But persons of better taste than I like it better than I do!

Jews—full of character. Isaac is too dignified and sad; gold never rusted the soul of the man that owned that face.

The Landscapes. At these I look with such unalloyed delight, that I have been at moments tempted to wish that the artist had concentrated his powers on this department of art, in so high a degree does he exhibit the attributes of the master; a power of sympathy, which gives each landscape a perfectly individual character. Here the painter is merged in his theme, and these pictures affect us as parts of nature, so absorbed are we in contemplating them, so difficult is it to remember them as pictures. How the clouds float! how the trees live and breathe out their mysterious souls in the peculiar attitude of every leaf. Dear companions of my life, whom yearly I know better, yet into whose heart I can no more penetrate than see your roots, while you live and grow, I feel what you have said to this painter; I can in some degree appreciate the power he has shown in repeating here the gentle oracle.

The soul of the painter is in these landscapes, but not his character. Is not that the highest art? Nature and the soul combined; the former freed from slight crudities or blemishes, the latter from its merely human aspect.

These landscapes are too truly works of art, their language is too direct, too lyrically perfect, to be translated into this of words, without doing them an injury.

To those, who confound praise with indiscriminate eulogium, and who cannot understand the mind of one, whose highest expression of admiration is a close scrutiny, perhaps the following lines will convey a truer impression, than the foregoing remarks, of the feelings of the writer. They were suggested by a picture painted by Mr. Allston for a gentleman of Boston, which has

never yet been publicly exhibited. It is of the same class with his *Rosalie* and *Evening Hymn*, pictures which were not particularized in the above record, because they inspired no thought except of their excelling beauty, which draws the heart into itself.

These two sonnets may be interesting, as showing how similar trains of thought were opened in the minds of two observers.

"To-day I have been to see Mr. Allston's new picture of *The Bride*, and am more convinced than ever of the depth and value of his genius, and of how much food for thought his works contain. The face disappointed me at first by its want of beauty. Then I observed the peculiar expression of the eyes, and that of the lids, which tell such a tale, as well as the strange complexion, all heightened by the colour of the background, till the impression became very strong. It is the story of the lamp of love, lighted, even burning with full force in a being that cannot yet comprehend it. The character is domestic, far more so than that of the ideal and suffering *Rosalie*, of which, nevertheless, it reminds you.

"TO W. ALLSTON, ON SEEING HIS 'BRIDE.'

"Weary and slow and faint with heavy toil,
The fainting traveller pursues his way,
O'er dry Arabian sands the long, long day,
Where at each step floats up the dusty soil;
And when he finds a green and gladsome isle,
And flowing water in that plain of care,
And in the midst a marble fountain fair,
To tell that others suffered too erewhile,
And then appeased their thirst, and made this fount
To them a sad remembrance, but a joy
To all who follow—his tired spirits mount
At such dim-visioned company—so I
Drink of thy marble source, and do not count
Weary the way in which thou hast gone by."

TO ALLSTON'S PICTURE, 'THE BRIDE.'

Not long enough we gaze upon that face,
Not pure enough the life with which we live,
To be full tranced by that softest grace,
To win all pearls those lucid depths can give;
Here Phantasy has borrowed wings of Even,
And stolen 'Twilight's latest, sacred hues,
A Soul has visited the woman's heaven,
Where palest lights a silver sheen diffuse,
To see aright the vision which he saw,
We must ascend as high upon the stair,
Which leads the human thought to heavenly law,
And see the flower bloom in its natal air;
Thus might we read aright the lip and brow,
Where Thought and Love beam too subduing for our senses now.

AMERICAN LITERATURE;

ITS POSITION IN THE PRESENT TIME, AND PROSPECTS FOR THE
FUTURE.

SOME thinkers may object to this essay, that we are about to write of that which has, as yet, no existence.

For it does not follow because many books are written by persons born in America that there exists an American literature. Books which imitate or represent the thoughts and life of Europe do not constitute an American literature. Before such can exist, an original idea must animate this nation and fresh currents of life must call into life fresh thoughts along its shores.

We have no sympathy with national vanity. We are not anxious to prove that there is as yet much American literature. Of those who think and write among us in the methods and of the thoughts of Europe, we are not impatient; if their minds are still best adapted to such food and such action. If their books express life of mind and character in graceful forms, they are good and we like them. We consider them as colonists and useful schoolmasters to our people in a transition state; which lasts rather longer than is occupied in passing, bodily, the ocean which separates the new from the old world.

We have been accused of an undue attachment to foreign continental literature, and, it is true, that in childhood, we had well nigh "forgotten our English," while constantly reading in other languages. Still, what we loved in the literature of continental Europe was the range and force of ideas, and the

forms of national and individual greatness. A model was before us in the great Latins of simple masculine minds seizing upon life with unbroken power. The stamp both of nationality and individuality was very strong upon them; their lives and thoughts stood out in clear and bold relief. The English character has the iron force of the Latins, but not the frankness and expansion. Like their fruits, they need a summer sky to give them more sweetness and a richer flavour. This does not apply to Shakspeare, who has all the fine side of English genius, with the rich colouring, and more fluent life, of the Catholic countries. Other poets, of England also, are expansive more or less, and soar freely to seek the blue sky, but take it as a whole, there is in English literature, as in English character, a reminiscence of walls and ceilings, a tendency to the arbitrary and conventional that repels a mind trained in admiration of the antique spirit. It is only in later days that we are learning to prize the peculiar greatness which a thousand times outweighs this fault, and which has enabled English genius to go forth from its insular position and conquer such vast dominion in the realms both of matter and of mind.

Yet there is, often, between child and parent, a reaction from excessive influence having been exerted, and such an one we have experienced, in behalf of our country, against England. We use her language, and receive, in torrents, the influence of her thought, yet it is, in many respects, uncongenial and injurious to our constitution. What suits Great Britain, with her insular position and consequent need to concentrate and intensify her life, her limited monarchy, and spirit of trade, does not suit a mixed race, continually enriched with new blood from other stocks the most unlike that of our first descent, with ample field and verge enough to range in and leave every impulse free, and abundant opportunity to develope a genius, wide and full as our

rooted in strength as the rocks on which the Puritan fathers landed.

That such a genius is to rise and work in this hemisphere we are confident; equally so that scarce the first faint streaks of that day's dawn are yet visible. It is sad for those that foresee, to know they may not live to share its glories, yet it is sweet, too, to know that every act and word, uttered in the light of that foresight, may tend to hasten or ennoble its fulfilment.

That day will not rise till the fusion of races among us is more complete. It will not rise till this nation shall attain sufficient moral and intellectual dignity to prize moral and intellectual, no less highly than political, freedom, not till, the physical resources of the country being explored, all its regions studded with towns, broken by the plow, netted together by railways and telegraph lines, talent shall be left at leisure to turn its energies upon the higher department of man's existence. Nor then shall it be seen till from the leisurely and yearning soul of that riper time national ideas shall take birth, ideas craving to be clothed in a thousand fresh and original forms.

Without such ideas all attempts to construct a national literature must end in abortions like the monster of Frankenstein, things with forms, and the instincts of forms, but soulless, and therefore revoking. We cannot have expression till there is something to be expressed.

The symptoms of such a birth may be seen in a longing felt here and there for the sustenance of such ideas. At present, it shows itself, where felt, in sympathy with the prevalent tone of society, by attempts at external action, such as are classed under the head of social reform. But it needs to go deeper, before we can have poets, needs to penetrate beneath the springs of action, to stir and remake the soil as by the action of fire.

Another symptom is the need felt by individuals of being even sternly sincere. This is the one great means by which alone

progress can be essentially furthered: Truth is the nursing mother of genius. No man can be absolutely true to himself, eschewing cant, compromise, servile imitation, and complaisance, without becoming original, for there is in every creature a fountain of life which, if not choked back by stones and other dead rubbish, will create a fresh atmosphere, and bring to life fresh beauty. And it is the same with the nation as with the individual man.

The best work we do for the future is by such truth. By use of that, in whatever way, we harrow the soil and lay it open to the sun and air. The winds from all quarters of the globe bring seed enough, and there is nothing wanting but preparation of the soil, and freedom in the atmosphere, for ripening of a new and golden harvest.

We are sad that we cannot be present at the gathering in of this harvest. And yet we are joyous, too, when we think that though our name may not be writ on the pillar of our country's fame, we can really do far more towards rearing it, than those who come at a later period and to a seemingly fairer task. Now, the humblest effort, made in a noble spirit, and with religious hope, cannot fail to be even infinitely useful. Whether we introduce some noble model from another time and clime, to encourage aspiration in our own, or cheer into blossom the simplest wood-flower that ever rose from the earth, moved by the genuine impulse to grow, independent of the lures of money or celebrity; whether we speak boldly when fear or doubt keep others silent, or refuse to swell the popular cry upon an unworthy occasion, the spirit of truth, purely worshipped, shall turn our acts and forbearances alike to profit, informing them with oracles which the latest time shall bless.

Under present circumstances the amount of talent and labour given to writing ought to surprise us. Literature is in this dim and struggling state, and its pecuniary results exceedingly

pitiful. From many well known causes it is impossible for ninety-nine out of the hundred, who wish to use the pen, to ~~ran~~om, by its use, the time they need. This state of things will have to be changed in some way. No man of genius writes for money ; but it is essential to the free use of his powers, that he should be able to disembarass his life from care and perplexity. This is very difficult here ; and the state of things gets worse and worse, as less and less is offered in pecuniary meed for works demanding great devotion of time and labour (to say nothing of the ether engaged) and the publisher, obliged to regard the transaction as a matter of business, demands of the author to give him only what will find an immediate market, for he cannot afford to take any thing else. This will not do ! When an immortal poet was secure only of a few copyists to circulate his works, there were princes and nobles to patronize literature and the arts. Here is only the public, and the public must learn how to cherish the nobler and rarer plants, and to plant the aloe, able to wait a hundred years for its bloom, or its garden will contain, presently, nothing but potatoes and pot-herbs. We shall have, in the course of the next two or three years, a convention of authors to inquire into the causes of this state of things and propose measures for its remedy. Some have already been thought of that look promising, but we shall not announce them till the time be ripe ; that date is not distant, for the difficulties increase from day to day, in consequence of the system of cheap publication, on a great scale.

The ranks that led the way in the first half century of this republic were far better situated than we, in this respect. The country was not so deluged with the dingy page, reprinted from Europe, and patriotic vanity was on the alert to answer the question, " Who reads an American book ? " And many were the books written, worthy to be read, as any out of the first class in

England. They were, most of them, except in their subject matter, English books.

The list is large, and, in making some cursory comments, we do not wish to be understood as designating *all* who are worthy of notice, but only those who present themselves to our minds with some special claims. In history there has been nothing done to which the world at large has not been eager to award the full meed of its deserts. Mr. Prescott, for instance, has been greeted with as much warmth abroad as here. We are not disposed to undervalue his industry and power of clear and elegant arrangement. The richness and freshness of his materials is such that a sense of enchantment must be felt in their contemplation. We must regret, however, that they should have been first presented to the public by one who possesses nothing of the higher powers of the historian, great leading views, or discernment as to the motives of action and the spirit of an era. Considering the splendour of the materials the books are wonderfully tame, and every one must feel that having once passed through them and got the sketch in the mind, there is nothing else to which it will recur. The absence of thought, as to that great picture of Mexican life, with its heroisms, its terrible but deeply significant superstitions, its admirable civic refinement, seems to be quite unbroken.

Mr. Bancroft is a far more vivid writer; he has great resources and great command of them, and leading thoughts by whose aid he groups his facts. But we cannot speak fully of his historical works, which we have only read and referred to here and there.

In the department of ethics and philosophy, we may inscribe two names as likely to live and be blessed and honoured in the later time. These are the names of Channing and of Emerson.

Dr. Channing had several leading thoughts which corresponded with the wants of his time, and have made him in it a father of thought. His leading idea of "the dignity of human nature"

is one of vast results, and the peculiar form in which he advocated it had a great work to do in this new world. The spiritual beauty of his writings is very great; they are all distinguished for sweetness, elevation, candour, and a severe devotion to truth. On great questions, he took middle ground, and sought a panoramic view; he wished also to stand high, yet never forgot what was above more than what was around and beneath him. He was not well acquainted with man on the impulsive and passionate side of his nature, so that his view of character was sometimes narrow, but it was always noble. He exercised an expansive and purifying power on the atmosphere, and stands a godfather at the baptism of this country.

The Sage of Concord has a very different mind, in every thing except that he has the same disinterestedness and dignity of purpose, the same purity of spirit. He is a profound thinker. He is a man of ideas, and deals with causes rather than effects. His ideas are illustrated from a wide range of literary culture and refined observation, and embodied in a style whose melody and subtle fragrance enchant those who stand stupified before the thoughts themselves, because their utmost depths do not enable them to sound his shallows. His influence does not yet extend over a wide space; he is too far beyond his place and his time, to be felt at once or in full, but it searches deep, and yearly widens its circles. He is a harbinger of the better day. His beautiful elocution has been a great aid to him in opening the way for the reception of his written word.

In that large department of literature which includes descriptive sketches, whether of character or scenery, we are already rich. Irving, a genial and fair nature, just what he ought to be, and would have been, at any time of the world, has drawn the scenes amid which his youth was spent in their primitive linea-

has his niche and need never be deposed; it is not one that another could occupy.

The first enthusiasm about Cooper having subsided, we remember more his faults than his merits. His ready resentment and way of showing it in cases which it is the wont of gentlemen to pass by in silence, or meet with a good humoured smile, have caused unpleasant associations with his name, and his fellow citizens, in danger of being tormented by suits for libel, if they spoke freely of him, have ceased to speak of him at all. But neither these causes, nor the baldness of his plots, shallowness of thought, and poverty in the presentation of character, should make us forget the grandeur and originality of his sea-sketches, nor the redemption from oblivion of our forest-scenery, and the noble romance of the hunter-pioneer's life. Already, but for him, this fine page of life's romance would be almost forgotten. He has done much to redeem these irrevocable beauties from the corrosive acid of a semi-civilized invasion.*

* Since writing the above we have read some excellent remarks by Mr. W. G. Simms on the writings of Cooper. We think the reasons are given for the powerful interest excited by Hawk Eye and the Pilot, with great discrimination and force.

"They both think and feel, with a highly individual nature, that has been taught, by constant contemplation, in scenes of solitude. The vast unbroken ranges of forest to its one lonely occupant press upon the mind with the same sort of solemnity which one feels condemned to a life of partial isolation upon the ocean. Both are permitted that degree of commerce with their fellow beings which suffices to maintain in strength the sweet and sacred sources of their humanity. * * * The very isolation to which, in the most successful of his stories, Mr. Cooper subjects his favourite personages, is, alone, a proof of his strength and genius. While the ordinary writer, the man of mere talent, is compelled to look around him among masses for his material, he contents himself with one man, and flings him upon the wilderness. The picture, then, which follows, must be one of intense individuality. Out of this one man's na-

Miss Sedgwick and others have portrayed, with skill and feeling, scenes and personages from the revolutionary time. *Such have a permanent value in proportion as their subject is fleeting. The same charm attends the spirited delineations of Mrs. Kirkland, and that amusing book, "A New Purchase." The features of Hoosier, Sucker, and Wolverine life are worth fixing; they are peculiar to the soil, and indicate its hidden treasures; they have, also, that charm which simple life, lived for its own sake, always has, even in rude and all but brutal forms..

What shall we say of the poets? The list is scanty; amazingly so, for there is nothing in the causes that paralyze other kinds of literature that could affect lyrical and narrative poetry. Men's hearts beat, hope, and suffer always, and they must crave such means to vent them; yet of the myriad leaves garnished with smooth stereotyped rhymes that issue yearly from our press, you will not find, one time in a million, a little piece written from any such impulse, or with the least sincerity or sweetness of tone. They are written for the press, in the spirit of imitation or vanity, the paltriest offspring of the human brain, for the heart disclaims, as the ear is shut against them. This is the kind of verse which is cherished by the magazines as a correspondent to the tawdry pictures of smiling milliners' dolls in the frontispiece. Like these they are only a fashion, a fashion based on no reality of love or beauty. The inducement to write them consists in a little money, or more frequently the charm of seeing an anonymous name printed at the top in capitals.

We must here, in passing, advert also to the style of story goes forward into the wilderness, whether of land or ocean; and the vicissitudes of either region, acting upon the natural resources of one man's mind, furnish the whole material of his work-shop. This mode of performance is highly dramatic, and thus it is that his scout, his trapper, his hunter, his pilot, all live to our eyes and thoughts, the perfect ideals of moral individuality.

current in the magazines, flimsy beyond any texture that was ever spun or even dreamed of by the mind of man, in any other age and country. They are said to be "written for the seamstresses," but we believe that every way injured class could relish and digest better fare even at the end of long days of exhausting labour. There are exceptions to this censure; stories by Mrs. Child have been published in the magazines, and now and then good ones by Mrs. Stephens and others; but, take them generally, they are calculated to do a positive injury to the public mind, acting as an opiate, and of an adulterated kind, too.

But to return to the poets. At their head Mr. Bryant stands alone. His range is not great, nor his genius fertile. But his poetry is purely the language of his inmost nature, and the simple lovely garb in which his thoughts are arranged, a direct gift from the Muse. He has written nothing that is not excellent, and the atmosphere of his verse refreshes and composes the mind, like leaving the highway to enter some green, lovely, fragrant wood.

Halleck and Willis are poets of society. Though the former has written so little, yet that little is full of fire,—elegant, witty, delicate in sentiment. It is an honour to the country that these occasional sparks, struck off from the flint of commercial life, should have kindled so much flame as they have. It is always a consolation to see one of them sparkle amid the rubbish of daily life. One of his poems has been published within the last year, written, in fact, long ago, but new to most of us, and it enlivened the literary thoroughfare, as a green wreath might some dusty, musty hall of legislation.

Willis has not the same terseness or condensed electricity. But he has grace, spirit, at times a winning pensiveness, and a lively, though almost wholly sensuous, delight in the beautiful.

Dana has written so little that he would hardly be seen in a more thickly garnished galaxy. But the masculine strength of

feeling, the solemn tenderness and refined thought displayed in such pieces as the "Dying Raven," and the "Husband and Wife's Grave," have left a deep impression on the popular mind.

Longfellow is artificial and imitative. He borrows incessantly, and mixes what he borrows, so that it does not appear to the best advantage. He is very faulty in using broken or mixed metaphors. The ethical part of his writing has a hollow, second-hand sound. He has, however, elegance, a love of the beautiful, and a fancy for what is large and manly, if not a full sympathy with it. His verse breathes at times much sweetness; and, if not allowed to supersede what is better may promote a taste for good poetry. Though imitative, he is not mechanical.

We cannot say as much for Lowell, who, we must declare it, though to the grief of some friends, and the disgust of more, is absolutely wanting in the true spirit and tone of poesy. His interest in the moral questions of the day has supplied the want of vitality in himself; his great facility at versification has enabled him to fill the ear with a copious stream of pleasant sound. But his verse is stereotyped; his thought sounds no depth, and posterity will not remember him.

R. W. Emerson, in melody, in subtle beauty of thought and expression, takes the highest rank upon this list. But his poems are mostly philosophical, which is not the truest kind of poetry. They want the simple force of nature and passion, and, while they charm the ear and interest the mind, fail to wake far-off echoes in the heart. The imagery wears a symbolical air, and serves rather as illustration, than to delight us by fresh and glowing forms of life.

We must here mention one whom the country has not yet learned to honour, perhaps never may, for he wants artistic skill to give complete form to his inspiration. This is William Ellery Channing; nephew and namesake of Dr. C., a volume of whose poems, published three or four years ago in Boston, remains un-

known, except to a few friends, nor, if known, would they probably, excite sympathy, as those which have been published in the periodicals have failed to do so. Yet some of the purest tones of the lyre are his, the finest inspirations as to the feelings and passions of men, deep spiritual insight, and an entire originality in the use of his means. The frequently unfinished and obscure state of his poems, a passion for forcing words out of their usual meaning into one which they may appropriately bear, but which comes upon the reader with an unpleasing and puzzling surprise, may repel, at first glance, from many of these poems, but do not mar the following sublime description of the beings we want, to rule, to redeem, to re-create this nation, and under whose reign alone can there be an American literature, for then only could we have life worth recording. The simple grandeur of this poem as a whole, must be felt by every one, while each line and thought will be found worthy of earnest contemplation and satisfaction after the most earnest life and thought.

Hearts of Eternity! hearts of the deep!
Proclaim from land to sea your mighty fate;
How that for you no living comes too late;
How ye cannot in Thëban labyrinth creep;
How ye great harvests from small surface reap;
Shout, excellent band, in grand primeval strain,
Like midnight winds that foam along the main,
And do all things rather than pause to weep.
A human heart knows naught of littleness,
Suspects no man, compares with no man's ways,
Hath in one hour most glorious length of days,
A recompense, a joy, a loveliness;
Like eaglet keen, shoots into azure far,
And always dwelling nigh is the remotest star.

A series of poems, called "Man in the Republic," by Cornelius Mathews, deserves a higher meed of sympathy than it has received. The thoughts and views are strong and noble, the ex-

hibition of them imposing. In plastic power this writer is deficient. His prose works sin in exuberance, and need consolidating and chastening. We find fine things, but not so arranged as to be seen in the right places and by the best light. In his poems Mr. Mathews is unpardonably rough and rugged; the poetic substance finds no musical medium in which to flow. Yet there is poetic substance which makes full chords, if not a harmony. He holds a worthy sense of the vocation of the poet, and worthily expresses it thus:—

To strike or bear, to conquer or to yield
 Teach thou! O' topmost crown of duty, teach,
 What fancy whispers to the listening ear,
 At hours when tongue nor taint of care impeach
 The fruitful calm of greatly silent hearts;
 When all the stars for happy thought are set,
 And, in the secret chambers of the soul,
 All blessed powers of joyful truth are met;
 Though calm and garlandless thou mayst appear,
 The world shall know thee for its crowned seer.

A considerable portion of the hope and energy of this country still turns towards the drama, that greatest achievement when wrought to perfection of human power. For ourselves, we believe the day of the regular drama to be past; and, though we recognize the need of some kind of spectacle and dramatic representation to be absolutely coincident with an animated state of the public mind, we have thought that the opera, ballet, pantomime and briefer, more elastic forms, like the *vaudeville* of the French theatre, or the *proverb* of the social party, would take the place of elaborate tragedy and comedy.

But those who find the theatres of this city well filled all the year round by an audience willing to sit out the heroisms of *Rolla*, and the sentimentalism and stale morality of such a piece as we were doomed to listen to while the Keans were here, ("Town and Country" was its name.) still think there is room

for the regular drama, if genius should engage in its creation. Accordingly there have been in this country, as well as in England, many attempts to produce dramas suitable for action no less than for the closet. The actor, Murdoch, about to devote himself with enthusiasm and hope to prop up a falling profession, is to bring out a series of plays written, not merely for him, but because his devotion is likely to furnish fit occasion for their appearance. The first of these, "Witchcraft, a tragedy," brought out successfully upon the boards at Philadelphia; we have read, and it is a work of strong and majestic lineaments; a fine originality is shown in the conception, by which the love of a son for a mother is made a sufficient *motiv* (as the Germans call the ruling impulse of a work) in the production of tragic interest; no less original is the attempt, and delightful the success, in making an aged woman a satisfactory heroine to the piece through the greatness of her soul, and the magnetic influence it exerts on all around her, till the ignorant and superstitious fancy that the sky darkens and the winds wait upon her as she walks on the lonely hill-side near her hut to commune with the Past, and seek instruction from Heaven. The working of her character on the other agents of the piece is depicted with force and nobleness. The deep love of her son for her, the little tender, simple ways in which he shows it, having preserved the purity and poetic spirit of childhood by never having been weaned from his first love, a mother's love, the anguish of his soul when he too becomes infected with distrust, and cannot discriminate the natural magnetism of a strong nature from the spells and lures of sorcery, the final triumph of his faith, all offered the highest scope to genius and the power of moral perception in the actor. There are highly poetic intimations of those lowering days with their veiled skies, brassy light, and sadly whispering winds, very common in Massachusetts, so ominous and brooding seen from any point, but from the idea of witchcraft, invested with an awful

significance. We do not know, however, that this could bring it beyond what it has appeared to our own sane mind, as if the air was thick with spirits, in an equivocal and surely sad condition, whether of purgatory or downfall; and the air was vocal with all manner of dark intimations. We are glad to see this mood of nature so fitly characterized.

The sweetness and *naïveté* with which the young girl is made to describe the effects of love upon her, as supposing them to proceed from a spell, are also original, and there is no other way in which this revelation could have been induced that would not have injured the beauty of the character and position. Her visionary sense of her lover, as an ideal figure, is of a high order of poetry, and these facts have very seldom been brought out from the cloisters of the mind into the light of open day.

The play is very deficient as regards rhythm; indeed, we might say there is no apparent reason why the lines should begin with capital letters. The minor personages are mere caricatures, very coarsely drawn; all the power is concentrated on the main characters and their emotions. So did not Shakspeare, does not even the genuine dramatist, whose mind teems with "the fulness of forms." As Raphael, in his most crowded groups can put in no misplaced or imperfect foot or hand, neither neglect to invest the least important figure of his backgrounds with every characteristic trait, nor could spare the invention of the most beautiful *coiffure* and accessories for the humblest handmaid of his Madonnas, so doth the great artist always clothe the whole picture with full and breathing life, for it appears so before his mental eye. But minds not perfectly artistical, yet of strong conceptions, subordinate the rest to one or two leading figures, and the imperfectly represented life of the others incloses them, as in a frame.

In originality of conception and execution, the play is

revert to a work in the department of narrative fiction, which, on similar grounds, comes to us as a harbinger of the new era. This book is "Margaret, or the Real and Ideal," a work which has appeared within the past year; and, considering its originality and genuineness, has excited admiration and sympathy amazingly soon. Even some leading reviews, of what Byron used to speak of as the "garrison" class, (a class the most opposite imaginable to that of Garrison abolitionists,) have discussed its pretensions and done homage to its merits. It is a work of great power and richness, a genuine disclosure of the life of mind and the history of character. Its descriptions of scenery and the common people, in the place and time it takes up, impart to it the highest value as a representative of transient existence, which had a great deal of meaning. The beautiful simplicity of action upon and within the mind of Margaret, Heaven lying so clearly about her in the infancy of the hut of drunkards, the woods, the village, and their ignorant, simply human denizens, her unconscious growth to the stature of womanhood, the flow of life impelled by her, the spiritual intimations of her dreams, the prophecies of music in the character of Chilion, the *naïve* discussion of the leading reform movements of the day in their rudimental forms, the archness, the humour, the profound religious faith, make of this book an aviary from which doves shall go forth to discover and report of all the green spots of promise in the land. Of books like this, as good, and still better, our new literature shall be full; and, though one swallow does not make a summer, yet we greet, in this one "Yankee novel," the sufficient earnest of riches that only need the skill of competent miners to be made current for the benefit of man.

Meanwhile, the most important part of our literature, while the work of diffusion is still going on, lies in the journals, which monthly, weekly, daily, send their messages to every corner of

this great land, and form, at present, the only efficient instrument for the general education of the people.

Among these, the Magazines take the lowest rank. Their object is principally to cater for the amusement of vacant hours, and, as there is not a great deal of wit and light talent in this country, they do not even this to much advantage. More wit, grace, and elegant trifling, embellish the annals of literature in one day of France than in a year of America.

The Reviews are more able. If they cannot compare, on equal terms, with those of France, England, and Germany, where, if genius be rare, at least a vast amount of talent and culture are brought to bear upon all the departments of knowledge, they are yet very creditable to a new country, where so large a portion of manly ability must be bent on making laws, making speeches, making rail-roads and canals. They are, however, much injured by a partisan spirit, and the fear of censure from their own public. This last is always slow death to a journal; its natural and only safe position is *to lead*; if, instead, it bows to the will of the multitude, it will find the ostracism of democracy far more dangerous than the worst censure of a tyranny could be. It is not half so dangerous to a man to be immured in a dungeon alone with God and his own clear conscience, as to walk the streets fearing the scrutiny of a thousand eyes, ready to veil, with anxious care, whatever may not suit the many-headed monster in its momentary mood. Gentleness is dignified, but caution is debasing; only a noble fearlessness can give wings to the mind, with which to soar beyond the common ken, and learn what may be of use to the crowd below. Writers have nothing to do but to love truth fervently, seek justice according to their ability, and then express what is in the mind; they have nothing to do with consequences, God will take care of those. The want of such noble courage, such faith in the power of truth and good desire, pervades

are afraid; and if a worthy resistance is not made by religious souls, there is danger that all the light will soon be put under bushels, lest some wind should waft from it a spark that may kindle dangerous fire.

For want of such faith, and the catholic spirit that flows from it, we have no great leading Review. The North American was once the best. While under the care of Edward Everett, himself a host in extensive knowledge, grace and adroitness in applying it, and the power of enforcing grave meanings by a light and flexible satire that tickled while it wounded, it boasted more force, more life, a finer scope of power. But now, though still exhibiting ability and information upon special points, it is entirely deficient in great leadings, and the *vivida vis*, but ambles and jogs at an old gentlemanly pace along a beaten path that leads to no important goal.

Several other journals have more life, energy and directness than this, but there is none which occupies a truly great and commanding position, a beacon light to all who sail that way. In order to this, a journal must know how to cast aside all local and temporary considerations when new convictions command, and allow free range in its columns, to all kinds of ability, and all ways of viewing subjects. That would give it a life, rich, bold, various.

The life of intellect is becoming more and more determined to the weekly and daily papers, whose light leaves fly so rapidly and profusely over the land. Speculations are afloat, as to the influence of the electric telegraph upon their destiny, and it seems obvious that it should raise their character by taking from them in some measure, the office of gathering and dispersing the news, and requiring of them rather to arrange and interpret it.

This mode of communication is susceptible of great excellence in the way of condensed essay, narrative, criticism, and is the

ones deck the poet's corner, is because the indifference or unfitness of editors, as to choosing and refusing, makes this place, at present, undesirable to the poet. It might be otherwise.

The means which this organ affords of diffusing knowledge and sowing the seeds of thought where they may hardly fail of an infinite harvest, cannot be too highly prized by the discerning and benevolent. Minds of the first class are generally indisposed to this kind of writing; what must be done on the spur of the occasion and cast into the world so incomplete, as the hurried offspring of a day or hour's labour must generally be, cannot satisfy their judgment, or do justice to their powers. But he who looks to the benefit of others, and sees with what rapidity and ease instruction and thought are assimilated by men, when they come thus, as it were, on the wings of the wind, may be content, as an unhonoured servant to the grand purposes of Destiny, to work in such a way at the Pantheon which the Ages shall complete, on which his name may not be inscribed, but which will breathe the life of his soul.

The confidence in uprightness of intent, and the safety of truth, is still more needed here than in the more elaborate kinds of writing, as meanings cannot be fully explained nor expressions revised. Newspaper writing is next door to conversation, and should be conducted on the same principles. It has this advantage: we address, not our neighbour, who forces us to remember his limitations and prejudices, but the ideal presence of human nature as we feel it ought to be and trust it will be. We address America rather than Americans.

A worthy account of the vocation and duties of the journalist, is given by Cornelius Mathews. Editors, generally, could not do better than every New Year's day to read and insert the following verses.

As shakes the canvass of a thousand ships,
Struck by a heavy land-breeze, far at sea,

Ruffle the thousand broad sheets of the land,
Filled with the people's breath of potency.

A thousand images the hour will take,
From him who strikes, who rules, who speaks, who sings,
Many within the hour their grave to make,
Many to live, far in the heart of things.

A dark-dyed spirit he, who coins the time,
To virtue's wrong, in base disloyal lies,
Who makes the morning's breath, the evening's tide,
The utterer of his blighting forgeries.

How beautiful who scatters, wide and free,
The gold-bright seeds of loved and loving truth!
By whose perpetual hand, each day supplied,
Leaps to new life the empire's heart of youth.

To know the instant and to speak it true,
Its passing lights of joy, its dark, sad cloud,
To fix upon the unnumbered gazer's view,
Is to thy ready hand's broad strength allowed.

There is an inwrought life in every hour,
Fit to be chronicled at large and told.
'Tis thine to pluck to light its secret power,
And on the air its many-colored heart unfold.

The angel that in sand-dropped minutes lives,
Demands a message cautious as the ages,
Who stuns, with dusk-red words of hate his ear,
That mighty power to boundless wrath enrages.

This feeling of the dignity of his office, honour and power in fulfilling it, are not common in the journalist, but, where they exist, a mark has been left fully correspondent to the weight of the instrument. The few editors of this country who, with mental ability and resource, have combined strength of purpose and fairness of conduct, who have never merged the man and the gentleman in the partisan, who have been willing to have all sides fully heard, while their convictions were clear on one, who have disdained groundless assaults or angry replies, and have valued

what was sincere, characteristic and free, too much to bend to popular errors they felt able to correct, have been so highly prized that it is wonderful that more do not learn the use of this great opportunity. It will be learned yet; the resources of this organ of thought and instruction begin to be understood, and shall yet be brought out and used worthily.

We see we have omitted honoured names in this essay. We have not spoken of Brown, as a novelist by far our first in point of genius and instruction as to the soul of things. Yet his works have fallen almost out of print. It is their dark, deep gloom that prevents their being popular, for their very beauties are grave and sad. But we see that Ormond is being republished at this moment. The picture of Roman character, of the life and resources of a single noble creature, of Constantia alone, should make that book an object of reverence. All these novels should be republished; if not favorites, they should at least not be lost sight of, for there will always be some who find in such powers of mental analysis the only response to their desires.

We have not spoken of Hawthorne, the best writer of the day, in a similar range with Irving, only touching many more points and discerning far more deeply. But we have omitted many things in this slight sketch, for the subject, even in this stage, lies as a volume in our mind, and cannot be unrolled in completeness unless time and space were more abundant. Our object was to show that although by a thousand signs, the existence is foreshown of those forces which are to animate an American literature, that faith, those hopes are not yet alive which shall usher it into a homogeneous or fully organized state of being. The future is glorious with certainties for those who do their duty in the present, and, lark-like, seeking the sun, challenge its eagles to an earthward flight, where their nests may be built in our mountains.

Since finishing the foregoing essay, the publication of some volumes by Hawthorne and Brown have led to notices in "The Tribune," which, with a review of Longfellow's poems, are subjoined to eke out the statement as to the merits of those authors.

MOSSES FROM AN OLD MANSE: By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.—In Two Parts. New-York: Wiley and Putnam. 1846.

WE have been seated here the last ten minutes, pen in hand, thinking what we can possibly say about this book that will not be either superfluous or impertinent.

Superfluous, because the attractions of Hawthorne's writings cannot fail of one and the same effect on all persons who possess the common sympathies of men. To all who are still happy in some groundwork of unperverted Nature, the delicate, simple, human tenderness, unsought, unbought and therefore precious morality, the tranquil elegance and playfulness, the humour which never breaks the impression of sweetness and dignity, do an inevitable message which requires no comment of the critic to make its meaning clear. Impertinent, because the influence of this mind, like that of some loveliest aspects of Nature, is to induce silence from a feeling of repose. We do not think of any thing, particularly worth saying about this that has been so fitly and pleasantly said.

Yet it seems *unfit* that we, in our office of chronicler of intellectual advents and apparitions, should omit to render open and audible honour to one whom we have long delighted to honour. It may be, too, that this slight notice of ours may awaken the attention of those distant or busy who might not otherwise search for the volume, which comes betimes in the leafy month of June.

So we will give a slight account of it, even if we cannot say

much of value. Though Hawthorne has now a standard reputation, both for the qualities we have mentioned and the beauty of the style in which they are embodied, yet we believe he has not been very widely read. This is only because his works have not been published in the way to ensure extensive circulation in this new, hurrying world of ours. The immense extent of country over which the reading (still very small in proportion to the mere working) community is scattered, the rushing and pushing of our life at this electrical stage of development, leave no work a chance to be speedily and largely known that is not trumpeted and placarded. And, odious as are the features of a forced and artificial circulation, it must be considered that it does no harm in the end. Bad books will not be read if they are bought instead of good, while the good have an abiding life in the log-cabin settlements and Red River steamboat landings, to which they would in no other way penetrate. Under the auspices of Wiley and Putnam, Hawthorne will have a chance to collect all his own public about him, and that be felt as a presence which before was only a rumor.

The volume before us shares the charms of Hawthorne's earlier tales; the only difference being that his range of subjects is a little wider. There is the same gentle and sincere companionship with Nature, the same delicate but fearless scrutiny of the secrets of the heart, the same serene independence of petty and artificial restrictions, whether on opinions or conduct, the same familiar, yet pensive sense of the spiritual or demoniacal influences that haunt the palpable life and common walks of men, not by many apprehended except in results. We have here to regret that Hawthorne, at this stage of his mind's life, lays no more decisive hand upon the apparition—brings it no nearer than in former days. We had hoped that we should see, no more as in a glass darkly, but face to face. Still, still brood over his page the genius of revery and the nonchalance of Nature, rather than

the ardent earnestness of the human soul which feels itself born not only to see and disclose, but to understand and interpret such things. Hawthorne intimates and suggests, but he does not lay bare the mysteries of our being.

The introduction to the "Mosses," in which the old manse, its inhabitants and visitants are portrayed, is written with even more than his usual charm of placid grace and many strokes of his admirable good sense. Those who are not, like ourselves, familiar with the scene and its denizens, will still perceive how true that picture must be; those of us who are thus familiar will best know how to prize the record of objects and influences unique in our country and time.

"The Birth Mark" and "Rapaccini's Daughter," embody truths of profound importance in shapes of aerial elegance. In these, as here and there in all these pieces, shines the loveliest ideal of love, and the beauty of feminine purity (by which we mean no mere acts or abstinences, but perfect single truth felt and done in gentleness) which is its root.

"The Celestial Railroad," for its wit, wisdom, and the graceful adroitness with which the natural and material objects are interwoven with the allegories, has already won its meed of admiration. "Fire-worship" is a most charming essay for its domestic sweetness and thoughtful life. "Goodman Brown" is one of those disclosures we have spoken of, of the secrets of the breast. Who has not known such a trial that is capable indeed of sincere aspiration toward that only good, that infinite essence, which men call God. Who has not known the hour when even that best beloved image cherished as the one precious symbol left, in the range of human nature, believed to be still pure gold when all the rest have turned to clay, shows, in severe ordeal, the symptoms of alloy. Oh, hour of anguish, when the old familiar faces grow dark and dim in the lurid light—when the gods of the hearth, honoured in childhood, adored in youth, crumble, and nothing,

nothing is left which the daily earthly feelings can embrace—can cherish with unbroken faith! Yet some survive that trial more happily than young Goodman Brown. They are those who have not sought it—have never of their own accord walked forth with the Tempter into the dim shades of Doubt. Mrs. Bull-Frog is an excellent humorous picture of what is called to be “content at last with substantial realities!!” The “Artist of the Beautiful” presents in a form that is, indeed, beautiful, the opposite view as to what *are* the substantial realities of life. Let each man choose between them according to his kind. Had Hawthorne written “Roger Malvin’s Burial” alone, we should be pervaded with the sense of the poetry and religion of his soul.

As a critic, the style of Hawthorne, faithful to his mind, shows repose, a great reserve of strength, a slow secure movement. Though a very refined, he is also a very clear writer, showing, as we said before, a placid grace, and an indolent command of language.

And now, beside the full, calm yet romantic stream of his mind, we will rest. It has refreshment for the weary, islets of fascination no less than dark recesses and shadows for the imaginative, pure reflections for the pure of heart and eye, and like the Concord he so well describes, many exquisite lilies for him who knows how to get at them.

ORMOND; OR, THE SECRET WITNESS.

WIELAND; OR, THE TRANSFORMATION. By CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN.
Library of Standard Romance. W. Taylor & Co., 2 Astor House.

WE rejoice to see these reprints of Brown’s novels, as we have long been ashamed that one who ought to be the pride of the country, and who is, in the higher qualities of the mind, so far in

advance of our other novelists, should have become almost inaccessible to the public.

It has been the custom to liken Brown to Godwin. But there was no imitation, no second-hand in the matter. They were congenial natures, and whichever had come first might have lent an impulse to the other. Either mind might have been conscious of the possession of that peculiar vein of ore without thinking of working it for the mint of the world, till the other, led by accident, or overflow of feeling, showed him how easy it was to put the reveries of his solitary hours into words and upon paper for the benefit of his fellow men.

"My mind to me a kingdom is."

Such a man as Brown or Godwin has a right to say that. It is no scanty, turbid rill, requiring to be daily fed from a thousand others or from the clouds! Its plenteous source rushes from a high mountain between bulwarks of stone. Its course, even and full, keeps ever green its banks, and affords the means of life and joy to a million gliding shapes, that fill its deep waters, and twinkle above its golden sands.

Life and Joy! Yes, Joy! These two have been called the dark masters, because they disclose the twilight recesses of the human heart. Yet their gravest page is joy compared with the mixed, shallow, uncertain pleasures of vulgar minds. Joy! because they were all alive and fulfilled the purposes of being. No sham, no imitation, no convention deformed or veiled their native lineaments, checked the use of their natural force. All alive themselves, they understood that there is no joy without truth, no perception of joy without real life. Unlike most men, existence was to them not a tissue of words and seemings, but a substantial possession.

Born Hegelians, without the pretensions of science, they sought God in their own consciousness, and found him. The heart,

because it saw itself so fearfully and wonderfully made, did not disown its Maker. With the highest idea of the dignity, power and beauty of which human nature is capable, they had courage to see by what an oblique course it proceeds, yet never lose faith that it would reach its destined aim. Thus their darkest disclosures are not hobgoblin shows, but precious revelations.

Brown is great as ever human writer was in showing the self-sustaining force of which a lonely mind is capable. He takes one person, makes him brood like the bee, and extract from the common life before him all its sweetness, its bitterness, and its nourishment.

We say makes *him*, but it increases our own interest in Brown that, a prophet in this respect of a better era, he has usually placed this thinking royal mind in the body of a woman. This personage too is always feminine, both in her character and circumstances, but a conclusive proof that the term *feminine* is not a synonym for *weak*. Constantia, Clara Wieland, have loving hearts, graceful and plastic natures, but they have also noble thinking minds, full of resource, constancy, courage. The Marguerite of Godwin, no less, is all refinement, and the purest tenderness, but she is also the soul of honour, capable of deep discernment and of acting in conformity with the inferences she draws. The man of Brown and Godwin has not eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and been driven to sustain himself by sweat of his brow for nothing, but has learned the structure and laws of things, and become a being, rational, benignant, various, and desirous of supplying the loss of innocence by the attainment of virtue. So his woman need not be quite so weak as Eve, the slave of feeling or of flattery: she also has learned to guide her helm amid the storm across the troubled waters.

The horrors which mysteriously beset these persons, and against which, so far as outward facts go, they often strive in

in the same way throughout the affairs of this world. Their demoniacal attributes only represent a morbid state of the intellect, gone to excess from want of balance with the other powers. There is an intellectual as well as a physical drunkenness, and which no less impels to crime. Carwin, urged on to use his ventriloquism, till the presence of such a strange agent awakened the seeds of fanaticism in the breast of Wieland, is in a state no more foreign to nature than that of the wretch executed last week, who felt himself drawn as by a spell to murder his victim because he had thought of her money and the pleasures it might bring him, till the feeling possessed his brain that hurls the gamester to ruin. The victims of such agency are like the soldier of the Rio Grande, who, both legs shot off and his life-blood rushing out with every pulse, replied serenely to his pitying comrades that "he had now that for which the soldier enlisted." The end of the drama is not in this world, and the fiction which rounds off the whole to harmony and felicity before the curtain falls, sins against truth, and deludes the reader. The Nelsons of the human race are all the more exposed to the assaults of fate that they are decorated with the badges of well-earned glory. Who, but feels as they fall in death, or rise again to a mutilated existence, that the end is not yet? Who, that thinks, but must feel that the recompense is, where Brown places it, in the accumulation of mental treasure, in the severe assay by fire that leaves the gold pure to be used sometime—somewhere.

Brown, man of the brooding eye, the teeming brain, the deep and fervent heart; if thy country prize thee not and has almost lost thee out of sight, it is that her heart is made shallow and cold, her eye dim, by the pomp of circumstance, the love of gross outward gain. She cannot long continue thus, for it takes a great deal of soul to keep a huge body from disease and dissolution. As there is more soul thou wilt be more sought, and many will yet sit down with thy Constantia to the meal and water on which

she sustained her full and thoughtful existence, who could not endure the ennui of aldermanic dinners, or find any relish in the imitation of French cookery. To-day many will read the words, and some have a cup large enough to receive the spirit, before it is lost in the sand on which their feet are planted.

Brown's high standard of the delights of intellectual communion and of friendship correspond with the fondest hopes of early days. But in the relations of real life, at present, there is rarely more than one of the parties ready for such intercourse as he describes. On the one side there will be dryness, want of perception or variety, a stupidity unable to appreciate life's richest boon when offered to its grasp, and the finer nature is doomed to retrace its steps, unhappy as those who having force to raise a spirit cannot retain or make it substantial, and stretch out their arms only to bring them back empty to the breast.

POEMS. By HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW; with Illustrations by D. HUNTINGTON. Philadelphia; Carey & Hart, Chesnut-st. 1845.

POETRY is not a superhuman or supernatural gift. It is, on the contrary, the fullest and therefore most completely natural expression of what is human. It is that of which the rudiments lie in every human breast, but developed to a more complete existence than the obstructions of daily life permit, clothed in an adequate form, domesticated in nature by the use of apt images, the perception of grand analogies, and set to the music of the spheres for the delight of all who have ears to hear. We have uttered these remarks, which may, to many of our readers, seem truisms, for the sake of showing that our definition of poetry is large enough to include all kinds of excellence. It includes not only the great bards, but the humblest minstrels. The great bards

bring to light the more concealed treasures, gems which centuries have been employed in forming and which it is their office to reveal, polish, and set for the royal purposes of man ; the wandering minstrel with his lighter but beautiful office calls the attention of men to the meaning of the flowers, which also is hidden from the careless eye, though they have grown and bloomed in full sight of all who chose to look. All the poets are the priests of Nature, though the greatest are also the prophets of the manhood of man. For, when fully grown, the life of man must be all poetry ; each of his thoughts will be a key to the treasures of the universe ; each of his acts a revelation of beauty, his language will be music, and his habitual presence will overflow with more energy and inspire with a nobler rapture than do the fullest strains of lyric poetry now.

Meanwhile we need poets ; men more awakened to the wonders of life, and gifted more or less with a power to express what they see, and to all who possess, in any degree, those requisites we offer and we owe welcome and tribute, whether the place of their song be in the Pantheon, from which issue the grand decrees of immortal thought, or by the fireside, where hearts need kindling and eyes need clarifying by occasional drops of nectar in their tea.

But this—this alone we claim, and can welcome none who cannot present this title to our hearing ; that the vision be genuine, the expression spontaneous. No imposition upon our young fellow citizens of pinchbeck for gold ! they must have the true article, and pay the due intellectual price, or they will wake from a life-long dream of folly to find themselves beggars.

And never was a time when satirists were more needed to scourge from Parnassus the magpies who are devouring the food scattered there for the singing birds. There will always be a good deal of mock poetry in the market with the genuine ; it

is a fair proportion preserved, we abstain from severe weeding lest the two come up together ; but when the tares have almost usurped the field, it is time to begin and see if the field cannot be freed from them and made ready for a new seed-time.

The rules of versification are now understood and used by those who have never entered into that soul from which metres grow as acorns from the oak, shapes as characteristic of the parent tree, containing in like manner germs of limitless life for the future. And as to the substance of these jingling rhymes, and dragging, stumbling rhythms, we might tell of bombast, or still worse, an affected simplicity, sickly sentiment, or borrowed dignity ; but it is sufficient to comprise all in this one censure. The writers did not write because they felt obliged to relieve themselves of the swelling thought within, but as an elegant exercise which may win them rank and reputation above the crowd. Their lamp is not lit by the sacred and inevitable lightning from above, but carefully fed by their own will to be seen of men.

There are very few now rhyming in England, not obnoxious to this censure, still fewer in our America. For such no laurel blooms. May the friendly poppy soon crown them and grant us stillness to hear the silver tones of genuine music, for, if such there be, they are at present almost stifled by these fifes and gongs.

Yet there is a middle class, composed of men of little original poetic power, but of much poetic taste and sensibility, whom we would not wish to have silenced. They do no harm, but much good, (if only their minds are not confounded with those of a higher class,) by educating in others the faculties dominant in themselves. In this class we place the writer at present before us.

We must confess to a coolness towards Mr. Longfellow, in consequence of the exaggerated praises that have been bestowed upon him. When we see a person of moderate powers receive

honours which should be reserved for the highest, we feel somewhat like assailing him and taking from him the crown which should be reserved for grander brows. And yet this is, perhaps, ungenerous. It may be that the management of publishers, the hyperbole of paid or undiscerning reviewers, or some accidental cause which gives a temporary interest to productions beyond what they would permanently command, have raised such an one to a place as much above his wishes as his claims, and which he would rejoice, with honourable modesty, to vacate at the approach of one worthier. We the more readily believe this of Mr. Longfellow, as one so sensible to the beauties of other writers and so largely indebted to them, *must* know his own comparative rank better than his readers have known it for him.

And yet so much adulation is dangerous. Mr. Longfellow, so lauded on all hands—now able to collect his poems which have circulated so widely in previous editions, and been paid for so handsomely by the handsomest annuals, in this beautiful volume, illustrated by one of the most distinguished of our younger artists—has found a flatterer in that very artist. The portrait which adorns this volume is not merely flattered or idealized, but there is an attempt at adorning it by expression thrown into the eyes with just that which the original does not possess, whether in face or mind. We have often seen faces whose usually coarse and heavy lineaments were harmonized at times into beauty by the light that rises from the soul into the eyes. The intention Nature had with regard to the face and its wearer, usually eclipsed beneath bad habits or a bad education, is then disclosed, and we see what hopes Death has in store for that soul. But here the enthusiasm thrown into the eyes only makes the rest of the face look more weak, and the idea suggested is the anomalous one of a dandy Pindar.

Such is not the case with Mr. Longfellow himself. He is never a Pindar, though he is sometimes a dandy even in the

clean and elegantly ornamented streets and trim gardens of his verse. But he is still more a man of cultivated taste, delicate though not deep feeling, and some, though not much, poetic force.

Mr. Longfellow has been accused of plagiarism. We have been surprised that any one should have been anxious to fasten special charges of this kind upon him, when we had supposed it so obvious that the greater part of his mental stores were derived from the works of others. He has no style of his own growing out of his own experiences and observations of nature. Nature with him, whether human or external, is always seen through the windows of literature. There are in his poems sweet and tender passages descriptive of his personal feelings, but very few showing him as an observer, at first hand, of the passions within, or the landscape without.

This want of the free breath of nature, this perpetual borrowing of imagery, ~~this~~ excessive, because superficial, culture which he has derived from an acquaintance with the elegant literature of many nations and men out of proportion to the experience of life within himself, prevent Mr. Longfellow's verses from ever being a true refreshment to ourselves. He says in one of his most graceful verses :

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,
From those deep cisterns flows.

Now this is just what we cannot get from Mr. Longfellow. No solitude of the mind reveals to us the deep cisterns.

Let us take, for example of what we do not like, one of his worst pieces, the Prelude to the Voices of the Night—

Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground ;

His hoary arms uplifted be,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee
With one continuous sound.

What an unpleasant mixture of images! Such never rose in a man's mind, as he lay on the ground and looked up to the tree above him. The true poetry for this stanza would be to give us an image of what was in the writer's mind as he lay there and looked up. But this idea of the leaves clapping their little hands with glee is taken out of some book; or, at any rate, is a book thought, and not one that came in the place, and jars entirely with what is said of the tree uplifting its hoary arms. Then take this other stanza from a man whose mind *should* have grown up in familiarity with the American *genius loci*.

Therefore at Pentecost, which brings
The Spring clothed like a bride,
When nestling buds unfold their wings,
And bishop's caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things,
I sought the woodlands wide.

Musing upon many things—ay! and upon many books too, or we should have nothing of Pentecost or bishop's caps with their golden rings. For ourselves, we have not the least idea what bishop's caps are;—are they flowers?—or what? Truly, the schoolmaster was abroad in the woodlands that day! As to the conceit of the wings of the buds, it is a false image, because one that cannot be carried out. Such will not be found in the poems of poets; with such the imagination is all compact, and their works are not dead mosaics, with substance inserted merely because pretty, but living growths, homogeneous and satisfactory throughout.

Such instances could be adduced every where throughout the poems, depriving us of any clear pleasure from any one piece, and placing his poems beside such as those of Bryant in the same

light as that of the prettiest *made* shell, beside those whose every line and hue tells a history of the action of winds and waves and the secrets of one class of organizations.

But, do we, therefore esteem Mr. Longfellow a wilful or conscious plagiarist? By no means. It is his misfortune that other men's thoughts are so continually in his head as to overshadow his own. The order of ~~the~~ development is for the mind the same as the body, to take in just so much food as will sustain it in its exercise and assimilate with its growth. If it is so assimilated—if it becomes a part of the skin, hair and eyes of the man, it is his own, no matter whether he pick it up in the woods, or borrow from the dish of a fellow man, or receive it in the form of manna direct from Heaven. "Do you ask the genius," said Goethe, "to give an account of what he has taken from others. As well demand of the hero an account of the beeves and loaves which have nourished him to such martial stature."

But Mr. Longfellow presents us, not with a new product in which all the old varieties are melted into a fresh form, but rather with a tastefully arranged Museum, between whose glass cases are interspersed neatly potted rose trees, geraniums and hyacinths, grown by himself with aid of in-door heat. Still we must acquit him of being a willing or conscious plagiarist. Some objects in the collection are his own; as to the rest, he has the merit of appreciation, and a re-arrangement, not always judicious, but the result of feeling on his part.

Such works as Mr. Longfellow's we consider injurious only if allowed to usurp the place of better things. The reason of his being overrated here, is because through his works breathes the air of other lands, with whose products the public at large is but little acquainted. He will do his office, and a desirable one, of promoting a taste for the literature of these lands before his readers are aware of it. As a translator he shows the same qualities as in his own writings: what is feasible and

he does not render adequately ; grace and sentiment he appreciates and reproduces. Twenty years hence, when he stands upon his own merits, he will rank as a writer of elegant, if not always accurate taste, of great imitative power, and occasional felicity in an original way, where his feelings are really stirred. He has touched no subject where he has not done somewhat that is pleasing, though also his poems are much marred by ambitious failings. As instances of his best manner we would mention "The Reaper and the Flowers," "Lines to the Planet Mars," "A Gleam of Sunshine," and "The Village Blacksmith." His two ballads are excellent imitations, yet in them is no spark of fire. In "Nuremberg" are charming passages. Indeed, the whole poem is one of the happiest specimens of Mr. L.'s poetic feeling, taste and tact in making up a rosary of topics and images. Thinking it may be less known than most of the poems we will quote it. The engraving which accompanies it of the rich old architecture is a fine gloss on its contents.

NUREMBERG.

In the valley of the Pegnitz, where across broad meadow lands
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nuremberg, the ancient, stands.
Quaint old town of toil and traffic—quaint old town of art and song—
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the rooks that round them throng ;
Memories of the Middle Ages, when the Emperors, rough and bold,
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time defying, centuries old ;
And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted in their uncouth rhyme,
That their great imperial city stretched its hand through every clime.
In the court-yard of the castle, bound with many an iron band,
Stands the mighty linden, planted by Queen Cunigunda's hand.
On the square the oriel window, where in old heroic days,
Sat the poet Melchior, singing Kaiser Maximilian's praise.
Every where I see around me rise the wondrous world of Art—
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture, standing in the common mart ;
And above cathedral doorways, saints and bishops carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned as apostles to our own.
In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps enshrined his holy dust,
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from age to age their trust ;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a Pix of sculpture rare,
 Like the foamy sheaf of fountains, rising through the painted air.
 Here, when Art was still Religion, with a simple reverent heart,
 Lived and laboured Albert Durer, the Evangelist of Art;
 Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with busy hand,
 Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for the Better Land.
Emigravit is the inscription on the tomb-stone where he lies;
 Dead he is not, but departed, for the Artist never dies.
 Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sunshine seems more fair,
 That he once has trod its pavement—that he once has breathed its air!
 Through those streets so broad and stately, these obscure and dismal lanes,
 Walked of yore the Master-singers, chanting rude poetic strains.
 From remote and sunless suburbs came they to the friendly guild,
 Building nests in Fame's great temple, as in spouts the swallows build.
 As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he to the mystic rhyme,
 And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's chime;
 Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom
 In the forge's dust and cinders—in the tissues of the loom.
 Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
 Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in huge folios sang and laughed.
 But his house is now an ale-house, with a nicely sanded floor,
 And a garland in the window, and his face above the door;
 Painted by some humble artist, as in Adam Paschman's song,
 As the old man grey and dove-like, with his great beard white and long.
 And at night the swarth mechanic comes to drown his cank and care,
 Quaffing ale from pewter tankards in the master's antique chair.
 Vanished is the ancient splendour, and before my dreamy eye
 Wave these mingling shapes and figures, like a faded tapestry.
 Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard;
 But thy painter, Albert Durer, and Hans Sachs, thy cobbler bard.
 Thus, oh, Nuremberg! a wanderer from a region far away,
 As he paced thy streets and court-yards, sang in thought his careless lay;
 Gathering from the pavement's crevice, as a flow'et of the soil,
 The nobility of labour, the long pedigree of toil.

This image of the thought gathered like a flower from the
 crevice of the pavement, is truly natural and poetical.

Here is another image which came into the mind of the writer
 as he looked at the subject of his verse, and which pleases accor-

dingly. It is from one of the new poems, addressed to Driving Cloud, "chief of the mighty Omahaws."

Wrapt in thy scarlet blanket I see thee stalk through the city's
Narrow and populous streets, as once by the margin of rivers
Stalked those birds unknown, that have left us only their foot-prints.
What, in a few short years, will remain of thy race but the foot-prints ?

Here is another very graceful and natural simile :

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain.

Another—

I will forget her! All dear recollections,
Pressed in my heart like flowers within a book,
Shall be torn out and scattered to the winds.

The drama from which this is taken is an elegant exercise of the pen, after the fashion of the best models. Plans, figures, all are academical. It is a faint reflex of the actions and passions of men, tame in the conduct and lifeless in the characters, but not heavy, and containing good meditative passages.

And now farewell to the handsome book, with its Preciosos and Preciosas, its Vikings and knights, and cavaliers, its flowers of all climes, and wild flowers of none. We have not wished to depreciate these writings below their current value more than truth absolutely demands. We have not forgotten that, if a man cannot himself sit at the feet of the muse, it is much if he prizes those who may ; it makes him a teacher to the people. Neither have we forgotten that Mr. Longfellow has a genuine respect for his pen, never writes carelessly, nor when he does not wish to, nor for money alone. Nor are we intolerant to those who prize hot-house bouquets beyond all the free beauty of nature ; that helps the gardener and has its uses. But still let us not forget—
Excelsior !!

SWEDENBORGIANISM.

NOBLE'S APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE VIEWS HELD BY THE NEW (or Swedenborgian) CHURCH. Second edition, 1845. Boston: T. H. Carter & Co.—Otis Clapp.

ESSAYS BY THEOPHILUS PARSONS. Boston: Otis Clapp, School-st. 1845.

THE CORNER STONE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM, by B. F. BARRETT. New York: Bartlett and Wellford, Astor House; John Allen, 139 Nassau-street, 1845.

THE claim to be the New Church, or peculiarly the founders of a New Jerusalem, is like exclusive claims to the title of Orthodox. We have no sympathy with it. We believe that all kinds of inspiration and forms of faith have been made by the power that rules the world to coöperate in the development of mental life with a view to the eventual elucidation of truth. That ruling power overrules the vanity of men, or just the contrary would ensue. For men love the letter that killeth better than the spirit that continually refreshes its immortal life. They wish to compress truth into a nut-shell that it may be grasped in the hand. They wish to feel sure that they and theirs hold it all. In vain! More incompressible than light, it flows forth anew, and, while the preacher was finishing the sermon in which he proclaimed that now the last and greatest dispensation had arrived, and that all the truth could henceforward be encased within the walls of a church—it has already sped its way to unnumbered zones, planted in myriad new-born souls the seeds of life, and wakened in myriads more a pulse that cannot be tamed down by dogma or doctrine, but must always throb at each new revelation of the glories of the infinite.

Were there, indeed, a catholic church which should be based on a recognition of universal truths, simple as that proposed by Jesus, Love God with all thy soul and strength, thy neighbour as thyself; *such* a church would include all sincere motions of the spirit, and sects and opinions would no more war with one another than roses in the garden, but, like them, all contentedly grace a common soil and render their tribute to one heaven.

Then we should hear no more of *the* church, creed, or teacher, but of *a* church, creed or teacher. Each man would adopt contentedly what best answered his spiritual wants, lovingly granting the same liberality to others. Then the variety of opinions would produce its natural benefit of testing and animating each mind in its natural tendency, without those bitter accompaniments that make theological systems so repulsive to religious minds.

Religious tolerance will, probably, come last in the progress of civilization, for, in those interests which search deepest, the weeds of prejudice have struck root deepest, too. But it will come; for we see its practicability sometimes proved in the intercourse between friends; and so shall it be between parties and groups of men, when intercourse shall have been placed on the same basis of mutual good-will and respect for one another's rights. Then those ugliest taints of spiritual arrogance and vanity shall begin to be washed out of this world.

As with all other cases, so with this! We believe in no new church *par excellence*. Swedenborgians are to us those taught of Swedenborg, a great, a learned, a wise, a good man—also one instructed by direct influx from a higher sphere, but one of a constellation, and needing the aid of congenial influences to confirm and illustrate his.

That the body of his followers do not constitute a catholic church would be sufficiently proved to us by the fact, asserted by all who come in contact with them, that they attach an exaggerated importance to the teachings of their master, which

shuts them in a great measure from the benefit of other teachings, and threatens to make them bigots, though of such mild strain as shows them to be the followers of one singularly mild and magnanimous.

For Swedenborg was one who, though entirely open and steadfast in the maintenance of his pretensions, knew how to live with kings, nobles, clergy, and people, without being the object of persecution to any. They viewed with respect, if not with confidence, his conviction that he was "in fellowship with angels." They knew the deep discipline and wide attainments of his mind. They saw that he forced his convictions on no one, but relied for their diffusion upon spiritual laws. They saw that he made none but an incidental use of his miraculous powers, and that it was not to him a matter of any consequence whether others recognized them or not ; for he knew that those whom truth does not reach by its spiritual efficacy cannot be made to believe by dint of signs and wonders.

Thus his life was, for its steady growth, its soft majesty, and exhibition of a faith never fierce and sparkling, never dim, a happy omen for the age. Thus gently and gradually may new organizations of great principles be effected now ! May it prove that, at least in the more advanced part of the world, revolutions may be effected without painful throes ! Such a life was in correspondence with his system, which is one of gradation and harmony.

I have used the word system, and yet it is not the right one. The works of Swedenborg contain intimations of a system, but it is one whose full development must be coincident with the perfection of all things. Some great rules he proffers, some ways of thinking opens ; we have centre and radii, but the circumference is not closed in.

This is to us the greatness of Swedenborg and the ground of our pleasure in his works, that in them we can expatiate freely ; there is room enough. We can take what we please from his

cline the rest : we may delight in his theory of forms or of correspondences, may be aided in tracing the hidden meanings of symbols, or animated by the poetic energy of his vision, without being bound down to things that seem to us unimportant. We can converse with *him* without acquiescing in the declaration that all angels have, at some time, been men, or the like, which seem to us groundless and arbitrary. It is not so with his followers ; they are like the majority of disciples ; if you do not know the master before knowing them, his true face will be hidden from you forever. Their minds being smaller, they lay the chief stress on what is least important in his instructions, and do not know how to express the best even of what they have received ; being too mighty for them to embrace they cannot reproduce it, though it acts upon their lives.

So it is with all the books at the head of this notice. Noble's Appeal has been, we understand, a famous book among the followers of Swedenborg. We did not find it sufficiently interesting to give it a thorough reading. It is addressed to those who object to Swedenborg from a low platform. It arrays arguments and evidences with skill, and in a good spirit, and contains particulars, as to matters of fact, that will interest those who have not previously met with them. It quotes Swedenborg's letter to Mr. Hartley, written with such a beautiful dignity, and giving so distinct an idea of the personal presence of the writer, also the letter of Kant with regard to one of Swedenborg's revelations as to a matter of fact, (the fire at Stockholm.) The letter has been quoted a hundred times before, but it always remains interesting to see the genuine candour with which a great mind can treat one so opposite to its own, and pleasant to see how far such an one is above the necessity felt by lesser minds of denying what they cannot explain.

doubt his sincerity, and in few cases could we have so little reason to doubt the correctness of perception in the seer. Swedenborg must be seen by any one acquainted with his mind to be in an extraordinary degree above the chance of self-delusion. As to the facts, the evidence which satisfied Kant might satisfy most people, one would suppose. As to the power of holding intercourse with spirits enfranchised from our present sphere, we see no reason why it should not exist, and do see much reason why it should rarely be developed, but none why it should not *sometimes*. Those spirits are, we all believe, existent somewhere, somehow, and there seems to be no good reason why a person in spiritual nearness to them, whom such intercourse cannot agitate, or engross so that he cannot walk steadily in his present path, should not enjoy it, when of use to him. But it seems to us that the stress laid upon such a fact, for or against, argues a want of faith in the immortality of souls. Why should those who believe in this care so very much whether one can rise from the dead to converse with his friend! We see that Swedenborg esteemed it merely as a condition of a certain state of mind, a great privilege as enlarging his means of attaining knowledge and holiness. For ourselves, it is not as a seer of ghosts, but as a seer of truths that Swedenborg interests us.

But to return to the books. They show the gradual extension of the influence of Swedenborg, and the nature of its effects. In Mr. Parsons's case they are good. His mind seems to have been expanded and strengthened by it. Parts of his book we have read with pleasure, and think it should be a popular one among the more thoughtful portion of the great reading public. As to Mr. Barrett's discourse, the basis of Swedenborgianism had seemed to us broader than such a corner stone would lead us to suppose. Generally, we would say, read Swedenborg himself before you touch his interpreters. In him you will find a great

and great and tender sympathies be gratified in you. Then, if you wish to prop yourself by doctrines taken from his works, and hasten to practical conclusions, you can do so for yourself, and from Swedenborg *himself* learn how to be a Swedenborgian ; but we hope he may teach you rather to become an earnest student of truth as he was, for it is so, and not by crying, " Lord, Lord," that you can know him or any other great and excelling mind. But, whatever the result be, read him first, and then you may profit by comparison of your own observations with those of other scholars ; but, if you begin with them, it is, even more than usual, in such cases, the blind leading the blind. Confucius had among the host one perfect disciple ; others have been, in some degree, thus favoured, but Swedenborg had none such, and he is not far enough off yet for the common sense of mankind to have marked out what is of leading importance in his thoughts. Therefore, search for yourselves ; it is a mighty maze, but not without a plan, and the report of all guide-books, thus far, is partial.

METHODISM AT THE FOUNTAIN.

THE LIFE OF CHARLES WESLEY. Comprising a Review of his Poetry, and Sketches of the Rise and Progress of Methodism, with Notices of Contemporary Events and Characters. By THOMAS JACKSON. New-York, 1844.

THIS is a reprint of a London work, although it does not so appear on the title-page. We have lately read it in connection with another very interesting book, Clarke's "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," and have been led to far deeper interest in this great stream of religious thought and feeling by a nearer approach to its fountain-head.

The world at large takes its impression of the Wesleys from Southey. A humbler historian has scarce a chance to be heard beside one so rich in learning and talent. Yet the Methodists themselves are not satisfied with this account of their revered shepherds, which, though fair in the intention, and tolerably fair in the arrangement of facts, fails to convey the true spiritual sense, and does not, to the flock, present a picture of the fields where they were first satisfied with the food of immortals.

A better likeness, if not so ably painted, may indeed be found in chronicles written by the disciples of these great and excellent men, who, as characters full of affection no less than intellect, need also to be affectionately, no less than intellectually, discerned, in order to a true representation of their deeds and their influence.

The books we have named, and others which relate to the Wesleys, are extremely interesting, apart from a consideration of the

men and what their lives were leading to, from the various and important documents they furnish, illustrative of the symptoms and obscurer meanings of their times.

In the account of the family life of the rectory of Epworth, where John and Charles Wesley passed their boyish years, we find a great deal that is valuable condensed. And we look upon the picture of home and its government with tenfold interest, because the founders of the Methodist church inherited, in a straight line, the gifts of the Spirit through their parentage, rather than were taught by angels that visited them now and then unawares, or received the mantle from some prophet who was passing by, as we more commonly find to have been the case in the histories of distinguished men. This is delightful; for we long to see parent and child linked to one another by natural piety—kindred in mind no less than by blood.

The father of the Wesleys was worthy so to be in this, that he was a fervent lover of the right, though often narrow and hasty in his conceptions of it. He was scarce less, however, by nature a lover of having his own will. The same strong will was tempered in the larger and deeper character of his son John, to that energy and steadfastness of purpose which enabled him to carry out a plan of operations so extensive and exhausting through so long a series of years and into extreme old age.

This wilfulness, and the disposition to tyranny which attends it, the senior Mr. Wesley showed on the famous occasion when he abandoned his wife because her conscience forbade her to assent to his prayers for the then reigning monarch, and was only saved from the consequences of his rash resolve by the accident of King William happening to die shortly after. Still more cruel, and this time fatal, was the conduct it induced in marrying one of his daughters, against her will and judgment, to a man whom she did not love, and who proved to be entirely unworthy of her. The sacrifice of this daughter, the fairest and brightest of his family,

seems most strangely and wickedly wilful ; and it is impossible to read the letter she addressed to him on the subject without great indignation against him, and sadness to see how, not long ago, the habit of authority and obedience could enable a man to dispense with the need and claim of genuine reverence.

Yet he was, in the main, good, and his influence upon his children good, as he sincerely sought, and encouraged them to seek, the one thing needful. He was a father who would never fail to give noble advice in cases of conscience ; and his veneration for intellect and its culture was only inferior to that he cherished for piety.

As has been generally the case, however, with superior men, the better part, both of inheritance and guidance, came from the mother. Mrs. Susannah Wesley was, as things go in our puny society, an extraordinary woman, though, we must believe, precisely what would be, in a healthy and natural order, the ordinary type of woman. She was endowed with a large understanding, the power of reasoning and the love of truth, animated by warm and generous affections. Her mental development began very early, so that, at the age of thirteen, she had made, and on well-considered grounds, a change in her form of theological faith. The progress so early begun, did not, on that account, stop early, but was continued, and with increasing energy, throughout her whole life. The manifold duties of a toilsome and difficult outward existence, (of which it is enough to say that she was the mother of nineteen children, many of whom lived to grow up, the wife of a poor man, and one whose temper drew round him many difficulties) only varied and furthered her improvement by the manifold occasions thus afforded for thought and action. In her prime she was the teacher and cheerful companion of her children, in declining years at once their revered monitor and willing pupil. Indeed, she was one that

foster and sustain the growth of all around her. Even the little pedantries of her educational discipline did more good than harm, as they were full of her own individuality. And it would seem to be from the bias thus given that her sons acquired the tendency which, even in early years, drew to them the name of Methodists. How much too may not be inferred from the revival effected by her in her husband's parish during his absence, in so beautiful and simple a manner! How must impressions of that period have been stamped on the minds of her children, sure to recur and aid them whenever on similar occasions the universal voice should summon them to deviate from the usual and prescribed course, and the pure sympathies awakened by their efforts be the sole confirmation of their wisdom! How wisely and temperately she defends herself to her husband, winning the assent even of that somewhat narrow and arbitrary mind! With wisdom, even so tempered by a heart of charity and forbearance, did John and Charles Wesley maintain against the world of customs the bold and original methods which the deep emotions of their souls dictated to them, and won its assent; at least we think there is no sect on which the others collectively look with as little intolerance as on Methodism. /

(It may be remarked *par parenthese* that the biographer, Mr. Jackson, who shows himself, in many ways, to be a weak man, is rather shocked at Mrs. Wesley on those occasions where she shows so much character. His opinions however, are of no consequence, as he fairly lays before the reader the letters and other original documents which enable him to judge of this remarkable woman, and of her children, several of them no less remarkable—As we shall not again advert to Mr. Jackson, but only consider him as a cup in which we have received the juice of the Wesleyan grape, we will mention here his strange use of the work *superior* in ways such as these: "This book will be

read with superior interest" ; Lady —— met him with superior sympathy," &c.)

The children of the Epworth Rectory were, almost without exception, of more than usual dignity and richness of mind and character. They all were aspiring, and looked upon a human life chiefly as affording materials to fashion a temple for the service of God. But, though alike in the main purpose and tendency, their individualities were kept distinct in the most charming freshness. A noble sincerity and mutual respect marked all their intercourse, nor were the weaker characters unduly influenced by the stronger. In proportion to their mutual affection and reverence was their sincerity and decision in opposing one another, whenever necessary ; so that they were friendly indeed. The same real love which made Charles Wesley write on a letter assailing John, "Left unanswered by John Wesley's brother," made himself the most earnest and direct of critics when he saw or thought he saw any need of criticism or monition.

The children of this family shared, many of them, the lyric vein, though only in Charles did it exhibit itself with much beauty. It is very interesting to see the same gift taking another form in the genius for Music of his two sons. The record kept by him of the early stages of development in them is full of valuable suggestions, and we hope some time to make use of them in another connection. It is pleasant to see how the sympathies of the father melted away the crust of habitual opinions. It was far otherwise with the uncle, where the glow of sympathy was less warm.

The life of the two brothers was full of poetic beauty in its incidents and conduct. The snatching of the child, destined to purposes so important, "as a brand from the burning ;" their college life ; Charles's unwillingness to be "made a saint of all at once ;" and his subsequent yielding to the fervour of his

brother's spirit,—John Wesley's refusal to bind himself to what seemed at the time a good work, even for his mother's sake, because the Spirit within, if it did not positively forbid, yet did not say "I am ready," thus sacrificing the outward to the inward duty with a clear decision rare even in great minds,—their voyage to America, intercourse with the Moravians and Indians,—the trials to which their young simplicity and credulity there subjected them, but from which they were brought out safe by obeying the voice of Conscience,—their relations with Law, Böhler and Count Zinzendorf,—the manner of their marriages, their relations with one another and with Whitfield,—all are narrated with candour and fullness, and all afford subjects for much and valuable thought. As the mind of John Wesley was of stronger mould and in advance of his brother's, difference of opinion sometimes arose between them, and Charles, full of feeling, protested in a way calculated to grieve even a noble friend.—His conduct with regard to his brother's marriage seems to have been perfectly unjustifiable, and his heart to have remained strangely untaught by what he had felt and borne at the time of his own. Even after death his prejudices acted to prevent his mortal remains from resting beside those of his brother. In all those cases where John Wesley found his judgment interfered with, his affections disappointed or even deeply wounded, as was certainly the case in the breaking off his first engagement, while he felt the superior largeness and clearness of his own views, as he did in exercising the power of ordination, and when he wrote on the disappointment of his wish that the body of his brother should be interred in his own cemetery, because it was not regularly "consecrated earth;" "That ground is as holy as any in England," still the heart of John Wesley was always right and noble; still he looked at the motives of the friend, and could really say and wholly feel in the spirit of Christian love, "Be they forgiven.

This same heart of Christian love was shown in the division that arose between the brothers and Whitfield; and owing to this it was that division of opinion did not destroy unity of spirit, design and influence in the efforts of these good men to make their fellows good also. "The threefold cord," as they loved to call it, remained firm through life, and the world saw in them one of the best fruits of the religious spirit, mutual reverence in conscientious difference. This rarest sight alone would have given them a claim to instruct the souls of men.

We wish indeed that this spirit had been still better understood by them, and that, in ceasing to be the pupils of William Law, they had not felt obliged to denounce his mode of viewing religious truth as "poisonous mysticism." It is human frailty that requires to react, thus violently, against that we have left behind. The divine spirit teaches better, shows that the child was father of the man, and that which we were before has prepared us to be what we now are.

One of the deepest thinkers of our time believes that the exaggerated importance which each man and each party attaches to the aims and ways which engage him or it, and the far more odious depreciation of all others, are needed to give sufficient impetus and steadiness to their action. He finds grand correspondence in the laws of matter with this view of the laws of mind to illustrate and sustain his belief. Yet the soul craves and feels herself fit for something better, a wisdom that shall look upon the myriad ways in which men seek their common end—the development and elevation of their natures,—with calmness, as the Eternal does. For ourselves, in an age where it is still the current fallacy that he who does not attach this exaggerated importance to some doctrinal way of viewing spiritual infinities, and the peculiar methods of some sect of enforcing them in practice, has no religion, we see dawning here and there a light that predicts a better day—a day when sects and parties shall be

regarded only as schools of thought and life, and while a man prefers one for his own instruction, he may yet believe it is more profitable for his brethren differently constituted to be in others. It will then be seen that God takes too good care of his children to suffer all truth to be confined to any one church establishment, age, or constellation of minds, and it will be not only assented to in words, but believed in soul, that the Laws and Prophets may be condensed, as Jesus said, into this simple law, "Love God with all thy soul, thy fellow-man as thyself;" and that he who is filled with this spirit and strives to express it in life, however narrow cut be his clerical coat, or distorting to outward objects, no less than disfiguring to himself, his theological spectacles, has not failed both to learn and to do some good in this earthly section of existence. When this much has once been granted; when it is seen that the only true, the only Catholic Church, the Church whose communion, invisible to the outward eye, is shared by all spirits that seek earnestly to love God and serve Man, has its members in every land, in every Church, in every sect; and that they who have not this, in whatever tone and form they cry out, "Lord, Lord," have in truth never known Him; then may we hope for less narrowness and ignorance in the several sects, also, for all and each will learn of one another, and dwelling together in unity still preserve and unfold their life in individual distinctness. Such a platform we hope to see ascended by the men of this earth, of this or the coming age. At any rate, disengagement from present bonds, must lead to it, and thus we trust, the Wesleys have embraced William Law and found that his "poisonous mysticism" had its truth and its meaning also, while he rejoices that their minds, severing from his, took a different bias and reached a different class for which his teachings were not adapted. And thus, passing from section to section of the truth, the circle shall be filled at last, and it shall be seen

Charles and John Wesley seemed to fulfil toward their great family of disciples the offices commonly assigned to Woman and Man. Charles had a narrower, tamer, less reasoning mind, but great sweetness, tenderness, facility and lyric flow, "When successful in effecting the spiritual good of the most abject, his feelings rose to rapture." Soft pity filled his heart, and none seemed so near to him as the felon and the malefactor, because for none else was so much to be done.

His habitual flow of sacred verse was like the course of a full fed stream. In extreme old age, his habits of composition are thus pleasingly described :

"He rode every day (clothed for Winter, even in Summer,) a little horse, grey with age. When he mounted, if a subject struck him, he proceeded to expand and put it in order. He would write a hymn thus given him on a card (kept for that purpose) with his pencil in short hand. Not unfrequently he has come to the house on the City road, and having left the pony in the garden in front, he would enter, crying out 'Pen and ink! pen and ink!' These being supplied, he wrote the hymn he had been composing. When this was done, he would look round on those present, and salute them with much kindness, ask after their health, give out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity. He was fond of that stanza upon these occasions,

"There all the ship's company meet," &c.

His benign spirit is, we believe, gratified now by finding that company larger than he had dared to hope.

The mind of John Wesley was more masculine ; he was more of a thinker and leader. He is spoken of as credulous, as hoping good of men naturally, and able to hope it again from those that had deceived him. This last is weakness unless allied with wise decision and force, generosity when it is thus tempered. To the character of John Wesley it imparted a persuasive nobleness, and hallowed his earnestness with mercy. He had in a striking degree another of those balances between opposite forces which mark the great man. He kept himself open to new inspirations, was bold in apprehending and quick in carrying them out. Yet

with a resolve once taken he showed a steadiness of purpose beyond what the timid scholars of tradition can conceive.

In looking at the character of the two men, and the nature of their doctrine we well understand why their spirit has exercised so vast a sway, especially with the poor, the unlearned and those who had none else to help them. They had truth enough and force enough to uplift the burdens of an army of poor pilgrims and send them on their way rejoicing. We should delight to string together, in our own fashion, a rosary of thoughts and anecdotes illustrative of their career and its consequences, but, since time and our limits in newspaper space forbid, cannot end better than by quoting their own verse, for they are of that select corps, "the forlorn hope of humanity," to whom shortcoming in deeds has given no occasion to blush for the lofty scope of their words.

"Who but the Holy Ghost can make
A genuine gospel minister,
A bishop bold to undertake
Of precious souls the awful care?
The Holy Ghost alone can move
A sinner signers to convert,
Infuse the apostolic love
And bless him with a pastor's heart."

APPENDIX.

THE TRAGEDY OF WITCHCRAFT.

As the tragedy of Witchcraft has not been published, nor is likely to be, while the dramatic interests of the country are unprotected by any copyright law, it may not be amiss to afford the reader a further opportunity of passing his judgment on this production by a few extracts, and the publication of a contemporary comment on the play, with a letter in the Evening Post, giving an account of its first performance.

“The curtain rises in the new play upon a scene in a wood, and we are immediately introduced to the witch-haunted atmosphere of the era, for the spirit of that great persecution was abroad, as it were, in the air, and surrounded everything as a mysterious Presence. The first words between two of the yeomanry are tinged with the popular superstition. We feel from the very moment that there is a general blight, a tendency to evil that cannot be resisted. This is the perfection of the Tragic interest, and it never leaves us through the piece. It was a time of Superstition, when the Prince of the Powers of the Air set up his throne in Salem, clung to the skirts of the dark wood, hung threatening in the blackness of the cloud, interpreted his mysteries in the flight of birds, hung out his inscriptions in the withered folds of old women’s faces, to be read by conceited interpreters of Heaven’s law, and hypocritical men of cruelty. A fearful time that. In the play all this is felt, as the talk of the characters keeps continually approaching, by a species of fascination, as it were, the fatal subject. Day by day it gathers strength. From distant regions it is heard of in the neighbouring villages, and gradually approaches, like some fell disease, closing in upon the life—the devoted town of Salem, and within that town of Salem, at its very heart, the lives and persons of a man and woman of no ordinary mould among those townspeople, the hero and heroine of the play—the Mother and Son of the story. There are several passions at work in the Drama—there is Bigotry seeking its victim, Christianity borrowing weapons from Hell to circumvent the Devil—the jealousy of the lover serving God and his passion, too, at the same time, and calling Revenge—Religion—there are petty cowardice and curiosity, but far above them all, striking a root in nature deeper even than the mis-called devotion of those times, the relation between a mother and her son—the untaught emotion of boyhood rising up bolder and stronger than the inveterate hardihood and selfish hypocrisy of manhood. By this simple element of strength one human being at least is saved, and the expedients of that miserable age shattered and almost driven back from their strongholds.

How all this and more is done those who have seen or will soon witness this

tragedy, will be at no loss to understand. Mr. Murdoch is labouring to a purpose and with the author. The play is a beautiful example of development. All is elaborately wrought out, the details are numerous, and the result simplicity.

The plot is simply this. A proud woman of great independence and superior education, retires, when age and trouble have begun to set their marks upon her, to the comparative solitude of Salem. She bore trouble in her heart, was among the townspeople, but not of them, loved lonely walks on the hill side, gathered old Indian relics, which she kept out of reverence for the past. "The fee grief due to her single breast" was remorse for an act of pride, by which her husband had fallen in a duel. A word from her might have prevented the calamity, and she had not spoken it.

With such elements, and the material the meddlesome town naturally afforded, and the vile poison of witchcraft already introduced into the land, how easily was this woman implicated. She walked alone and talked much with herself—it was a trick of witchcraft. She possessed little Indian figures, which she called after the names of the local characters of the town—the magistrates and constables, whose religion was to be set at work either through fear or the insult—these were the instruments of incantation, like the waxen images of ancient necromancy. She laughed at the folly of her persecutors—it was of course hardened wickedness. The atmosphere is so choking, that the son yields and for a moment believes his mother's guilt, but when he listens to her explanation of the silent grief, the lonely walks, he spurns the whole brood in language and acts of unmeasured indignation. This is the triumph of the actor, as well as of the moral element in the fifth act. But evil men have had their counsel and completed their deed. The Witch is condemned to die!

"*Gideon.* The deed is done! Ruin upon a sacred head
Is piled, and ye are evermore accursed—
What have ye done—thou sepulchre of all belief
(*To Deacon Gidney.*)

And truth, stares not this lie you have enacted
Stark and o'erwhelming as a dead man's face
Against your path! What have ye proven
To drive this penalty against a venerable breast?
Some solitary walks, sacred as night,
Familiar love for hills and woods and fields,
A way through life out of your beaten path
But ever in the road to the pure Truth
And goodness of a heart troubled too much
In conscience for a deed that would have been
A feather's weight upon your brutish souls.

(*To the People.*)
Ye are the most accursed deceivers,
Most pitiful deluded men, this clime
Or century hath hatched. Ye have enfogged,
Darkened, and led astray my childish love,
Made this aged mother seem a horror and a hag
To one, who, drop by drop, would once have died—and will—
To save or serve her! Blasted this blest place
And made its men and women beasts of prey,
Hunting each other to chains and flames and deaths.

This passage tells much of the story. There are other incidents and personages. The Deacon is strongly marked, so is that feeble little shadow of him and the justice, petty officer Pudeator. The Deacon is described

A sturdy gentleman of solemn port,
Whose eyes are lobster-like in gaze, whose paunch
Is full and hungry ever, his step
Demure and confident as though he trod
On holy pavements always.

The little official is the type of timid, obsequious sextons, who hang upon the eyelids of the vestry and the clergyman, or any in authority. He always appears in character, and is sure of being laughed at. He bears about him with the best grace in the world the utmost extent of the ridiculous.

As a specimen of the dialogue, we give the first scene between the Deacon and Ambla, in which he seeks to entrap her.

Deacon. I should be sorry to know your age was racked
With pains, and vexed with old unquietness:
Sleep you well o' nights?

Ambla. I'm thankful for the rest
I find, and if the other villagers take
What I lose I'm thankful still.

Deacon. You seek your bed
Early, I hope, as doth become your age.

Ambla. A little walk on Maple Hill, a meditation
At the down-falling of the sun, and I
Am lapped in sleep.

Deacon. Dream you much now,
My aged friend—we at our age, that is, at yours,
Sometimes forego our dreams.

Ambla. I have not dreamed
A dream, for three and twenty years,
Except awake.

Deacon. Was there no vision in your sleep last night?
You heard of Margaret Purdy's death at Groton?
Her spectre, 'tis given out, passed over this house
Of yours—in a white flame at midnight.

Ambla. An angel, she, to honor so this low
Unworthy roof!

Deacon. You think well, then, of her, do you?
She was no praying woman, I am told.

Ambla. There is a silent service, sir, I've heard
It said, keeps up its worship at the heart
Although the lips be closed.

Deacon. What! prayer irregular and chance begot!
Sad orthodoxy! I, Deacon Perfect Gidney,—
A humble pattern to this lowly parish,
Am used to have a different way—
I snuff my candle with a prayer,
And with a prayer wind up my watch,
And go to prayer at striking of the clock,
The great one, my learned grandfather's gift,
In the Hall; and kindle with a prayer
My morning fire.

This is compact and straightforward, nothing wanting, nothing superfluous. The American writer who can sustain five acts of a play at this standard is an acquisition!

The scattered poetic beauties of single lines and figures, exercises of an original fancy, are numerous and always aid the dramatic element.

Passages like the following are sufficient proofs of a new poet and dramatist somewhere among us.

(*A Lover.*)

I would not give its balmy pains,
For calmest health: its pangs delicious,
Troubles full of joy, wakenings electrical
At dead of night, its dreams by day,
These are its bounties—

(*Gideon, of his Mother.*)

With what a smile she used, when shouting to her,
I came back from my first childish strayings
To the woods—to open wide her garden gate,
Young Salem's first of gardens tending,
And bring me in.
Chief was she in her majestical mild port
Of all women; guide to the lost and sad,
Helper to all poor neighbourhood—
Kindling her welcome fire, earliest
In this lone place, for wayfarers,
Of all creeds, all colours, and all climes.

(*A son's watchful guardianship.*)

Yes, yes—we know his weapon
Plays about that low-roofed house, free
And familiar as the breaking day.

(*Gideon's affection for his mother.*)

Ambla. Be calm, my son, nor love me too much!

Gid. Too much! the universe can hold it not!—

When from your hand I go, I die a death
At every step; you seem to hold the roof-tree
With your arm, to hang above the fields and whiten them:
Nor could I through the noon-day harvest toil,
Knew I your lap would not receive
My weary head when night draws on.

* * * * *

Gid. Then there's calamity at hand that colors everything.

(*No evil spirits in the New World.*)

Believe it not!

Believe it not!—Clear, crystal and unstained,
The gracious Power upholds this round of Earth
New found and beautiful: no foul nor ugly thing,
Hath power, I'm sure, in this world.

He sweeps apast me
With his glittering scythe and victor-arm.

If she be not, and these are hunters
For the sport's sake, if they pursue her,
Panther-like for the wild beauty
Of her ways.

* * * * *

Though I could see an hundred witches
'Gainst the white moon flying.

(The Spirit of Witchcraft).

There have been doings dark as night,
And close as death: murders and deadliest crimes
Which the clear eye of day has seen not!
Acts to outface the bloody wolf, and scare
The ravenous lion with his unappeasable mane!
Night's ear hath many counsels of the dark,
She hears the whispers of the self-reproached,
And blacker grows!

* * * * *

When boy and girl pluck flowers together,
Together wade, white-ankled in the shining stream.

Gid. (of his mother.)

Some silent place will miss her;
Out of these woods and from these stillnesses
A power with her may pass, bearing a light away!

Who reverences not the Past, Hereafter
Shall not reverence, nor hold to have had
A present time.

MUST is a lion that turns back
To tear its driver, you know, no less than hunt
What goes before.

What say you to a great-antlered elk
Tangling his horns amid the branches
Of the hemlock wood? to speckled swimmers
In still-water stream?

The Earth hath foothold

She passes and with th' invisible spirit talks,
And dallies with the hands of unfamiliar things.

Gid. What wonder now is this
Ambla. Sometimes it wanders the wood, sometimes
The free-flowered air: come softly on!—&c. &c.

From the Evening Post, New York, May 6th.

THE NEW DRAMA OF WITCHCRAFT.—We have received a letter from a correspondent in Philadelphia, touching the new play produced in that city on Monday evening last:

PHILADELPHIA, Tuesday, May 5, 1846.

Mr. Murdoch's new play of Witchcraft was performed last evening at the Walnut street theatre, to one of the most crowded houses of the season. The play had been prominently announced and spoken of in several of the morning papers, and had evidently created great expectation in advance. Tier above tier, from the orchestra to the gallery, rose the vast surface of heads. Here we thought was the material to try fully the new play. If it could hold the attention of this crowded body, it would be a success far beyond the approval of the few packed critical friends who generally attend on such occasions. The critics were not wanting either; the intellect of Philadelphia was well represented on the occasion. The curtain rose on a woodland scene in old Salem, and presently Mr. Murdoch appeared in his character of Gideon Bodish. He was never dressed or looked to greater advantage than in his closely fitting russet coat; his attitudes were after his manner exceedingly graceful, his voice music itself. In scene after scene, in every act, he drew down repeated applause, as he delivered one passage after another of singular poetic beauty, or fierce indignant eloquence.

It was evident from the first moment that the play was wholly unlike the ordinary efforts under the name of the "American Drama." It was bold, confident, original in illustration, and in the incidents and developments of the plot. The stage situations were new. The confirmation of Gideon's doubts of his mother's guilt of witchcraft at the crisis of the play by a species of sacred divination, an augury from a chance opened passage of the Bible, and the solemn introduction of a child to confront the accused in the grand trial scene, as they were managed, were proofs of undoubted genius on the part of the author.—The play was sown all over with the happiest poetical expressions, not merely in the leading parts, but with an unaccustomed prodigality on the part of a modern dramatist were thrown away, for stage purposes, on the lips even of the supernumeraries. Take such lines as these in the mouth of the mother, as she solves one of the perplexities of the piece her apparent guilt; not that of witchcraft, but the life-long remorse for the murder of her husband in a duel, whom she might have saved by declaring her innocence, which she was too proud to prove:

He thought that I had sinned
Against his love with that gay paramour,
Who was no more than birds are to the tree
They hover o'er, to me who lived in mine
Own thoughts above suspicion's climbing,

or this illustration, finely delivered by Murdoch, of the dark silent approach of the superstition upon the soul—

The night sits on this gloomy heart—
 I see an Indian on a hill top standing,
 Part of the silent fixedness of things;
 He breaks the mighty calm, wherein he stood
 Slow striding down the mountain's side.
 Swifter and darker as he nears us we regard him,
Flashing and red, woe's living thunder cloud,
 And now, and now, he bends above us—
 Dusk murder in the very person of itself—
 So creeps this hideous witchcraft on me.

Or such bits of description as the following, a perfect picture in the limits of a sentence;

You recollect old Tituba, the shrivelled squaw,
 Who wigwamed gloomily by the wood's edge
 Some summers past—

or so perfect an illustration as this of the gathering suspicions of his mother's life in Gideon's conversation—

Ever in his speech
There lived and moved as in the river stream
The fish, darkly and yet swift gliding
Old Ambla's form,

Yet these were not the chief merits, but accessories only to the dramatic action they never came to interrupt, but to aid the character and story. The longer single passages, or any just exhibition of the dialogue, would lead me beyond the limits of a letter.

In the general style of the acting—leading parts were taken by Mrs. Wallack, our old favourite Richings, and a very successful comical tipstaff by Chapman—and especially in the grouping and stage appointments no American play that we have seen has appeared to equal advantage. The scenery had been drawn on the spot at Salem, and Mr. Murdoch had been accompanied in his researches for the dress and costume of the period by Rev. Mr. Upham, the author of a book on the Salem Witchcraft. The bill states the costumes to have been "taken from portraits, paintings, &c. in possession of the Salem Historical Library association." The Deacon, a Justice, an old goodwife were admirable.

We have rarely witnessed a performance where the interest excited was better sustained. The uproarious elements in the pit and galleries, of which we were fearful, were subdued to perfect silence; the laugh at the comic characters, the Deacon's bloated presumption and Chapman's comicalities, was quickly changed to the earnest or pathetic as Gideon or the Mother entered the scene. It was a long and satisfactory study. At the close, Mr. Murdoch was loudly called for, made a short speech to the effect that he rejoiced in the warm reception he had received that evening; that he attributed this solely to the merits of the unknown American author, who did not wish to be known as a dramatic writer, and for whom he had pledged to maintain, and would strictly, the anonymous.